



St. F. Xavier College 1876

THE INTERNAL MISSION
OF
THE HOLY GHOST





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THE
INTERNAL MISSION
OF
THE HOLY GHOST.

BY
HENRY EDWARD,
CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.



Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum.

Liber Sapientiae, i. 7.

Cui enim adest Spiritus gratia, nihil deest. Et cui Spiritus Sanctus infunditur, magnarum plenitudo virtutum est.

S. AMBROSIIUS, *Expos. Evang. Luc.* lib. i. sect. 34.

Cum in corpore esset, vivebat: præcisum amittit vitam. Sic homo Christianus Catholicus est, dum in corpore vivit: præcisus hæreticus factus est, membrum amputatum non sequitur Spiritus.

S. AUG. *Serm. in Die Pent.* i. tom. v. p. 1090.

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TO THE CONGREGATION
OF THE
OBLATES OF S. CHARLES.

REVEREND AND DEAR FATHERS,

Nearly ten years ago I dedicated to you a very slender book on *The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost*. And now once more I add another, which traces at least the outline of the same subject.

The former book was on the special office of the Holy Ghost in the one visible Church, which is the organ of His divine Voice. The present volume deals with the universal office of the Holy Ghost in the souls of men. The former or special office dates from the Incarnation and the Day of Pentecost; the latter or universal office dates from the Creation, and at this hour still pervades by its operations the whole race of mankind. It is true to say with S. Irenæus, *Ubi Ecclesia ibi Spiritus*,—Where

the Church is there is the Spirit ; but it would not be true to say, Where the Church is not, neither is the Spirit there. The operations of the Holy Ghost have always pervaded the whole race of men from the beginning, and they are now in full activity even among those who are without the Church ; for God ‘ will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.’¹

I have, therefore, in this present volume, spoken of the universal office of which every living man has shared, and does share at this hour: and I have tried to draw the outline of our individual sanctification. Nobody can be more fully aware how slender and insufficient are both these books. They are only put out as provocations, in the hope of rousing you to fill up the outline.

It is my hope that some of you may be stirred up to edit, in one volume, the treatises of S. Didymus, S. Basil, and S. Ambrose on the Holy Ghost ; and also certain portions of S. Bonaventure, S. Thomas, S. Dionysius the Carthusian, and S. Bernardine of Sienna on the Graces and Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 4.

and on the Beatitudes which spring from them. These united would make a precious store for students and for preachers.

My belief is that these topics have a special fitness in the nineteenth century. They are the direct antidote both of the heretical spirit which is abroad, and of the unspiritual and worldly mind of so many Christians. The presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church is the source of its infallibility; the presence of the Holy Ghost in the soul is the source of its sanctification. These two operations of the same Spirit are in perfect harmony. The test of the spiritual man is his conformity to the mind of the Church. *Sentire cum Ecclesia*, in dogma, discipline, traditions, devotions, customs, opinions, sympathies, is the counter-sign that the work in our hearts is not from the diabolical spirit, nor from the human, but from the Divine.

S. Ambrose, S. Francis, S. Philip, S. Teresa, had an ardent devotion to the Holy Ghost. S. Teresa in her Life tells us that one day after Mass, on the vigil of Pentecost, in a very retired place where she often used to pray, she was reading a work on the Feast of Pentecost by a

Carthusian. I have always thought and hoped that it may have been the work of Dionysius, from whom I have quoted in these pages. His spiritual treatises are of singular beauty and depth ; uniting the subtilty and accuracy of a scholastic with the spiritual light and sweetness of a mystical theologian.

It would seem to me that the development of error has constrained the Church in these times to treat especially of the third and last clause of the Apostles' Creed : ' I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.' The definitions of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, of the Infallibility of the Vicar of Christ, bring out into distinct relief the twofold office of the Holy Ghost, of which one part is His perpetual assistance in the Church, the other His sanctification of the soul, of which the Immaculate Conception is the firstfruits and the perfect exemplar.

The living consciousness which the Catholic Church has, that it is the dwelling-place of the Spirit of Truth and the organ of His Voice seems to be still growing more and more vividly upon its pastors and people, as the nations are

falling away. *Hi sunt, qui segregant semetipsos animales, Spiritum non habentes.*² This prophecy of the Apostle is visibly fulfilling before our eyes ; while the unity, outward and inward, the unanimity and supernatural expansion of the Catholic Church by its own imperishable life and intrinsic force, bear witness of a Presence, a Mind, a Will, and a Power which is not of man, but of God. We seem to see and to touch the evidence of the promise : ‘I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever.’

‘It is expedient for you that I go ; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you ; but if I go, I will send Him to you,’ ‘the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him ; but you shall know Him, because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you.’

My purpose, however, is not to enter upon this large field in a preface, but only to commend to you, as the matter of your special study and the burden of your constant preaching, ‘the ministration of the Spirit’ under which we

² S. Jude 19.

are. S. Ambrose says, *Si appellare dominum Jesum sine Spiritu non possumus, utique sine Spiritu prædicare non possumus.*³ I can desire for you, therefore, no better gift than that you may all be *pleni Spiritu Sancto et Sapientia.*⁴ *Et vos, unctionem quam accepistis ab Eo, maneat in vobis. Et non necesse habetis ut aliquis doceat vos : sed sicut unctio ejus docet vos de omnibus, et verum est, et non est mendacium. Et sicut docuit vos, manete in Eo.*⁵

Believe me, Reverend and dear Fathers,

Yours very affectionately in Jesus Christ,

✠ HENRY EDWARD,

Archbishop of Westminster.

Ash Wednesday 1875.

³ *De Spiritu Sancto*, lib. i. xi. 124.

⁴ Acts vi. 3.

⁵ 1 S. John ii. 27.

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GRACE THE WORK OF A PERSON.

The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world ; and that which containeth all things hath knowledge of the voice. WISDOM i. 7.

THE Spirit of the Lord is God the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost fills the whole world. There is no place where He is not ; because, being God, He is boundless and omnipresent. He contains all things in Himself. He 'hath knowledge of the voice,' that is, He understands the voice of the whole creation of God ; for 'the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork ;' and the earth and the waters lift up their voices. The fowls of the air cry to their Maker, and He feedeth them ; and the abyss calls to the abyss, and the hearts of men are perpetually putting up their cry. There is a cry of worship and a cry of wickedness, a cry of piety and a cry of blasphemy, a cry of joy and a cry of sorrow ; and all these voices are heard in the ears of the Lord of hosts. Such is the plain meaning of the text.

My purpose is to trace in outline the work of the

Holy Ghost in the souls of men, one by one. The ever-blessed Trinity, whether in creation, or in redemption, or in sanctification, works in all things with a unity of will and power. There is one God, and all the acts of omnipotence are the acts of that one God; nevertheless, there are special offices which have been assumed and are exercised by the three Persons distinctly. God the Father is the Creator, God the Son is the Redeemer, God the Holy Ghost is the Sanctifier; and yet not so that the Son and the Holy Ghost are excluded from creation, or the Father and the Holy Ghost from redemption, or the Father and the Son from our sanctification. But each of these three Persons has assumed to Himself, by an economy of His own supreme wisdom, the special discharge of one of these three offices.

Now God the Holy Ghost has the office of our sanctification; and the office of Sanctifier is twofold. There is the work of the Holy Ghost in every individual soul from the beginning of the world; and that work of sanctification in each individual soul will continue to the end of the world. There is also the work of the Holy Ghost in the mystical Body of Christ, that is His Church, which office began from the day of Pentecost, and will continue to the second advent of the Son of God. Its fruit will be eternal;

but of this latter, or corporate office of the Holy Ghost, it is not my purpose now to speak. At other times, and as I could, I have spoken on this matter, and I have pointed out how the Church or the mystical Body of Christ is in its structure imperishable, and in its life indefectible, because it is indissolubly united to the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Life-giver ; I have shown also how, because it is indissolubly united to the Spirit of Truth, it can never fail in the knowledge of the perfect revelation of God ; and how, because its knowledge can never fail, its voice also is always guided by the continual light and assistance of the Spirit of Truth. It can therefore never err in enunciating or declaring the revealed knowledge which it possesses. But these are not the points on which I have to now speak. We are speaking of the office of the Sanctifier. It is because the Holy Ghost is united to the mystical Body of Christ, that the mystical Body is also holy. Sanctity is one of its notes. God the Holy Ghost dwells in it. The Fountain of holiness is open in the unity of that Body. The streams of holiness flow into it from His presence, and the fruits of holiness are to be seen in its members. This is the point of which I have now to speak : and yet not of the sanctity of the Church as a whole, but of the sanctification of individuals one by one ; that

is to say, of the work and the operation of the Holy Ghost in the individual soul, not of saints only, but of penitents, and of us all, even such as we are.

1. First, then, we must distinguish between the general work of the Holy Ghost which began with the beginning of the world, and the special work of the Holy Ghost which began with the Incarnation and the day of Pentecost. The general work of the Holy Ghost, as the Sanctifier of the soul in man, began before the Fall in the creation of man; for Adam when created was constituted in the state of grace. He was not created in, but constituted in, the state of original justice. The distinction between created and constituted is this: original justice was no part of the nature of man; it was a superadded gift, a supernatural perfection over and above the perfection or integrity of human nature. It was not due to man that he should have the gift of original justice: his perfection consisted in the body and the soul, the faculties and the powers—intellectual and moral—which constitute human nature. But original justice is more than this: namely, the gift of a supernatural grace and state, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul, illuminating it by the infusion of His light in the form of truth; and sanctifying it by the infusion of His grace in the form of sanctity.

This was original justice, and therefore Adam was in two ways the son of God. He was a son of God by nature, because he was created by God; and a son of God by grace, because the Holy Ghost dwelt in him. Further, because he had this original justice, he had also two other gifts. He had immortality in the body, because he was without sin; and he had perfect harmony and integrity, or order, in the soul, because the soul was under the direction and guidance of the Spirit of God. Therefore in Adam there were three perfections: there was the perfection of nature, the body and the soul; there was the supernatural perfection, or the indwelling of the Holy Ghost and of sanctifying grace; there was the preternatural perfection of immortality in the body and of harmony in the soul, in and with itself. Such was the work of the Holy Ghost. We do not indeed certainly know, but many theologians of the Church teach as probable, that in Adam there was by the light of faith an anticipation of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, so that he knew, at least in outline, the ever-blessed Trinity and the Incarnation of God. This at least is certain, that the fulness of light which was in him excluded all ignorance, for ignorance signifies the not knowing that which we ought to know. Now Adam had all knowledge which belonged to his state.

There was in Adam a nescience of many things. There was much that he did not know ; but he was not bound to know, he had no obligation to know, that which was beyond his state. And as his illumination was more perfect than ours, so in like manner the sanctification of the soul of the first man was the most perfect, the most profuse, save only the highest sanctification in the order of grace, of which we will speak hereafter: namely, that of the Second Adam and of His Immaculate Mother.

Such was the work of the Holy Spirit before the fall of man. By an act of disobedience that first creation was shattered, the presence of the Holy Ghost was forfeited, and the soul and the body of man were left in the substantial integrity which belongs to our nature ; but it was wounded with the three wounds of ignorance, of weakness, and of passion.

Since the Fall, the Spirit of God has assisted from the beginning every man that has come into the world born of Adam ; so that there never yet was any soul which had not sufficient grace, if it had sufficient fidelity to correspond with it, to escape eternal death. Keep ever in mind this great truth ; for it is the foundation of the whole doctrine of grace. There are men so narrow as to say, that no soul among the heathen can be saved. The perfections of God, the attributes

of mercy, love, tenderness, justice, equity—all rise up in array against so dark a theology. The word of God declares, first of all, that the Son of God is ‘the true Light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.’¹ Every soul created to the likeness of God is illuminated by the light of God even in his creation. There never yet was a soul born into the world that had not the light of reason, and the light of conscience, that is, the light of God, shining in the soul. The whole world is the reflection of the presence and of the perfection of God. The reason and the conscience, rightly exercised, can see and read His existence, His glory, and His Godhead, in the works of His hands. Again, the Psalmist says, speaking of God: ‘He hath set His tabernacle in the sun;’ and again, ‘He cometh forth out of the ends of heaven, and His circuit goeth to the end thereof again. There is no one that can hide himself from the heat thereof.’² That is, the glory, and the majesty, and the love of God, fill the whole world, pervade all things, all men are encompassed by it. No man can hide himself from the love and from the glory of God. Go where he may—if he walk upon the earth, God is there; if he ascend into heaven, He is there also; if he go down into the deep, God is there before Him.

¹ S. John i. 9.² Ps. xviii. 6, 7.

Every living soul therefore has an illumination of God in the order of nature, by the light of conscience, and by the light of reason, and by the working of the Spirit of God in his head and in his heart, leading him to believe in God, and to obey Him. Once more; Saint Paul says that 'God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth:'³ that is, without any exception, Jew or Gentile. And once more: 'We hope in the living God, Who is the Saviour of all men, and especially of the faithful;'⁴ that is, of those who believe, therefore of all men without exception. And two Pontiffs have condemned as heresy the two following assertions. That the heathen, and the Jews, and heretics, receive no influence from Jesus Christ, but that their will is without help, that is without grace, was condemned as a heresy by Alexander VIII. Again, that there is no grace given outside the Church, was also condemned as heresy by Clement XI.⁵ The work, therefore, of the Holy Ghost, even in the order of nature, so to say, that is, outside of the Church of God and of the revealed knowledge of Jesus Christ among the heathen—that working is universal in the soul of every individual human being; and if they who receive the assistance

³ 1 Tim. ii. 4.

⁴ Ib. iv. 10.

⁵ Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Würzburg, 1874, nn. 1162 and 1244.

of the Holy Ghost are faithful in corresponding with it, God in His unrevealed mercies will deal with them in ways secret from us. His mercies unknown to us are over all His works; and the infinite merits of the Redeemer of the world are before the mercy-seat of our Heavenly Father, for the salvation of those that follow even the little light which in the order of nature they receive.

Any gift of God given freely is a grace. Our very existence is a grace; every gift in nature is a grace; every light we receive from the world leading us to the knowledge of God—much more every doctrine we receive from revelation—is a grace; but this is not the sense in which we are speaking now. When we talk of the grace of the Holy Ghost we mean something interior dwelling in the soul; and therefore the grace of the Holy Spirit working in the soul may be thus defined. It is a gift of God infused into the soul, not due to nature, but something superadded to nature, a perfection above nature elevating the soul to the supernatural order, and leading it to justification and eternal life. Or, to put it shortly, it is the sanctifying power and the influx of the Holy Ghost; it is the presence of the Holy Ghost entering into the soul, and infusing sanctity into the soul. When grace takes possession of the soul, in the reason it assumes

the form of faith ; in the will it takes the form of hope ; and in the heart it takes the form of love : faith, hope, and charity are the three primary workings of the Holy Ghost in the soul. Again, grace may be described as the breath of the supernatural life, which God breathes into the soul of man. A breath of life as necessary to the soul as the natural breath of life is to the body. Therefore it has an operation universal, gratuitous, derived from the sovereign love of God, necessary, vital to man, and sufficient to eternal life. This, then, is the first working of the Holy Spirit from the beginning of the world ; and is at this moment even among those nations that have never received the faith.

2. But, secondly, the special office of the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier, of which we now speak, is within the bounds of the revelation of faith. From the beginning of the world there has always been a certain line of elect souls, who form a chain of the saints of God. God from all eternity foreknew who would be saved, and He predestinated them, first to grace in this world, and, through the faithful use of that grace, to glory in the world to come. God knows the number of His elect, and the world will go on until the last of that number has been gathered out and made perfect for the kingdom of God. Do

not misunderstand me for a moment, as if that predestination of God in any way conflicts with the perfect freedom of the human will. All those who are saved eternally will be saved by the sovereign grace of God, and by the free co-operation of their own will; and all those who are lost eternally will be lost because, by the free resistance of their will, they have refused to co-operate with the grace of God. The predestination of God in no way violates or takes away the perfect liberty of the human will. God created the will of man with liberty, and He respects the work of His own hands; but from the beginning there has been a line of His elect multiplying perpetually from Abel the just, continuing to expand in number from Abel to Enoch, from Enoch to Noe, from Noe to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses. In the twelve tribes of Israel the saints of God were multiplying continually; and to them God continually gave more and more of His graces, visions, revelations, promises, inspirations, vocations, and special calls: like that which called Abraham out from Ur of the Chaldees; inspirations like that which made Moses to be the Law-giver of His people, and made Aaron to be the Priest to minister before Him—graces which constituted the Prophets of Israel as the teachers, the rebukers, and the admonishers of

the people of God. All those were special graces bestowed by the Holy Ghost for the illumination and sanctification of the people of God; but over and above these there were special interior workings and graces of the Holy Ghost, increasing continually in their measure until the coming of Jesus Christ. Every saint before the coming of Jesus Christ was sanctified by the Holy Ghost in virtue of the foreseen redemption upon Calvary. The merits of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world obtained graces for the sanctification of God's elect from the beginning; and the sanctity of every saint like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of every penitent like David, the special graces of Saint Joseph and the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, were all purchased by the same most Precious Blood shed by the Son of God.

And now what is the nature of that grace? 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and of His fulness we have all received, and grace for grace.'⁶ The first Adam, of whom we are born by nature, was constituted in grace, but, by sinning, fell and died; 'and that which is born of the flesh is flesh.'⁷ We are born flesh and blood, and the Holy Ghost is not in us. The Second Adam is

⁶ S. John i. 16, 17.

⁷ Ib. iii. 6.

the Son of God Incarnate, the Fountain and Well-spring of all grace ; and in Him the Holy Ghost dwells, and from Him the graces of the Holy Ghost are poured out on us. This was the promise which He made when He was going away : ‘ It is expedient for you that I go. For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come ; but if I go, I will send Him to you.’⁸ ‘ I will not leave you orphans ; I will come to you.’⁹ On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, came to take up His office through the Incarnation of the Son. Our Lord had said : ‘ My Father worketh hitherto, and now I work ;’¹⁰ that is, the Father, the Creator, in the early dawn of the world manifested Himself by His power as the Maker of all things ; next, the Son manifested Himself by His Incarnation. Now we live under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. We are at this time committed to the care and guidance of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity ; so that the dispensation under which we are is the dispensation of the Spirit of God, the Sanctifier. It is wonderful, then, how men with the page of the New Testament before them can fail to see this—that the one great evangelical gift, the one great gift of the Gospel, is the gift of the Holy Ghost. ‘ For you have

⁸ S. John xvi. 7.⁹ Ib. xiv. 18.¹⁰ Ib. v. 17.

not received the spirit of bondage again in fear ; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry : Abba, Father.' . . . 'And if we be sons, we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.'¹¹ Our whole state is elevated. Because we are the children of the Second Adam, His Father is our Father ; because we are the sons of God by grace, He is our elder Brother. The Holy Ghost dwells in us, because He descends from our Head upon all His members. We are born again through Christ into a new and supernatural state. We are not restored to the state of original justice, but we are placed in a state of union with God through the Holy Ghost, like, though distinct from, that which the first man received. There is this further difference—he was in original justice, but it was possible for him to fall ; we are united to a divine Head sinless and immortal, Who therefore can never fall, for He is God. We, who are united with Him, receive from Him, by our regeneration, a special indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Not only every grace that was ever given to man before, all the graces that were ever granted under the law to the saints and to the penitents of Israel—not only all those are still given in fulness now to members of the Church, but

¹¹ Rom. viii. 15, 17.

there are superadded other graces which were never before given. In Israel there were no proper sacraments. There were shadows of sacraments, but the substance was not come. There was circumcision, and there were sacrifices of bulls and of goats, and ceremonial actions, and washing, and purifications, which were the types and shadows of things to come; but those were not proper sacraments, and they did not convey grace. There was no grace in them. They were external actions, like the taking of holy water, and they depended for their sanctifying power upon the internal state of the heart of those who used them. According to the measure of faith and piety in the heart of those who received them, was the measure of the grace received by their use. The grace did not spring from them, nor come through them, for they were not fountains or channels of grace. But the sacraments of the Church are fountains of grace—that is, grace is lodged in them; and they who receive them, if they put no bar of mortal sin in the way, infallibly receive that grace. Every soul that is baptised, if it put no bar, receives infallibly the grace of regeneration. Every soul that receives the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, if it put no bar of mortal sin, infallibly receives it; and so of all the other sacraments. There

is this also to be borne in mind. Every sacrament of the Church has two kinds of grace to bestow : there is the grace of the sacrament, and there is the sacramental grace. The grace of the sacrament is that which is infallibly communicated to every soul that does not put the bar of mortal sin. For instance, as I have said, Baptism confers a new birth ; the Sacrament of the Altar confers the Body and Blood of our Lord ; but every sacrament confers, over and above this, a sacramental grace ; and this is a special and peculiar privilege of the new law of Jesus Christ and of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, whereby God has sanctified every state of man, and has given to every such state a special and proportionate grace, to enable those who are in it to discharge its duties. Together with the gift of regeneration in Baptism is given the sacramental grace, which enables the regenerate to fulfil the duties of love, piety, and obedience—that is, all the duties of a son of God. In the Sacrament of Penance, over and above absolution, is given the sacramental grace to raise our sorrow from attrition to contrition, to inspire the will of mortification, and to fulfil all the duties of a penitent. In Confirmation, over and above the special and singular grace of strength, is given a sacramental grace, which abides in the soul,

enabling it to fulfil all the duties of a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and to endure the whole warfare of the world, the flesh, and the devil. In the Sacrament of the Altar, over and above the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, is given the sacramental grace of piety, devotion, tenderness, love, generosity, self-denial, conformity to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, according to the measure of the devotion and of the capacity of the heart. In the Sacrament of Matrimony there is given sacramental grace to fulfil all the duties, bear all the burdens, and to discharge all the offices belonging to the state in which those enter who make that lifelong contract. In the Sacrament of Orders there is given a grace, whereby a priest will always have a perpetual assistance for the discharge of his office in all its difficulties, whether in guiding others, or of preaching the Word of God, or in the administration of sacraments, or in the warfare that comes, first and above all, upon the priest in our conflict with the world. Lastly, to those who upon a dying bed receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, there is given all that is necessary to strengthen and prepare the soul to meet its Judge. It goes forth, cleansed and absolved, glad to expiate the last remaining debt, if need be, in waiting and in suffering the loving chastisements of purgatory.

Now here we must observe that, over and above all the graces that have ever been given by the Holy Spirit of God before the day of Pentecost, we have received the special grace of a new dispensation. We who are born again, and are members of the mystical Body of Christ, are under a dispensation of the Holy Ghost, so full, and of such manifold grace, that there is no state of man which is not embraced by it, and in which there is not given an abundance of grace, exceeding all measure that we can conceive, and meted out according to the necessities of each individual soul. Our Lord intended this when He said: 'I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.'¹² Upon all this spiritual grace comes the sonship which we have received. We are made sons of God by adoption. The glory of the sons of God is already upon us. We are united with God as children of our Heavenly Father by a bond the most intimate that is possible between the Creator and a creature. There is one only union higher and more intimate, and that is incommunicable: namely, the consubstantial unity of the Eternal Son with our manhood, after the likeness of which we, by adoption and grace, are made the sons of God. Therefore it is that Saint Paul, in

¹² S. John x. 10.

the Epistle to the Corinthians, draws out the contrast between the Law and the Gospel in this way: 'We are made,' he says, 'fit ministers, not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.'¹³ He adds, that upon our hearts is written the law of God, 'not with ink, but by the Spirit of God on the fleshy tables of the heart,'¹⁴ according to the promise God made before: 'This is the testament I will make with them: after those days, saith the Lord, I will write My laws in their minds, and in their hearts I will place them.'¹⁵ Lastly, Saint Paul says, glorious as was the law, and glorious as was the face of Moses after he had spoken with God, so that the people could not look upon his countenance, and Moses had need to cover his face with a veil because they could not endure its splendour, nevertheless we are under a dispensation of the Holy Ghost which is yet more glorious because 'we, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.'¹⁶

My purpose has been to draw out this truth, in order to show that the state of grace in which we are, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our hearts,

¹³ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

¹⁴ Ib. iii. 3.

¹⁵ Jerem. xxxi. 33; Heb. viii. 10, x. 16.

¹⁶ 2 Cor. iii. 18.

and by the exuberant assistance of grace in every state of the Christian life, lifts and elevates us to a supernatural order, higher than all that the world has ever known from the beginning. This elevation of man was specially reserved to these last times—that is, until the Incarnation of the Son of God. The state of a Christian child transcends, in supernatural grace and dignity, all that God has ever before bestowed upon His creatures. If, then, this be so, there are some plain practical lessons for us to learn.

1. And first, we ought to be habitually conscious that we are in a supernatural order. Dear brethren, if there be one thing that is to our shame, one thing which ought to cast us down with our faces in the dust, it is this: that we live all the day long as if there were no Holy Ghost, as if we were like the Ephesians who, when the Apostle asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed, said: ‘We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.’¹⁷ We live in the world and are worldly; we live on the earth and of the earth are earthy; we live for pleasure, we live for trade, for money, for levities, for frivolities, for the indulgence of our own will. Many live for worse: for they live in pride, in covetousness, in jealousies, in envies, in

¹⁷ Acts xix. 2.

animosities, in malice one with another. Many live in worse still, if it were possible so to say. They spend their years in revelling, wallowing in gross sins of sensuality; and yet they have been made temples of the Holy Ghost. They have been born again, they are regenerate, they have been made sons of God, heirs of His kingdom: and to all eternity they will bear the mark of their regeneration, the indelible character stamped upon them at the font, and they will bear also the mark of their confirmation—two terrible and divine witnesses against them: the evidence of their disobedience, because they have grieved the Holy Ghost until they quenched His light, and died in their sin. Is it not true that if you look round the world you see men on every side living as if they had never been born again? They live as if they were born of the flesh, and of the flesh only. They live for the world, and for nothing else. The words of the Apostle are terrible: ‘The sensual man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness unto him; neither can he understand them, because they are spiritually examined;’¹⁸ that is, spiritually discerned, spiritually known, spiritually tasted. I would ask you whether the traders, and the merchants, and the profligates,

¹⁸ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

and the worldlings, and the ambitious, and the proud, and the covetous, and the violent, and the unjust, are not living all the day long, and all the year round, and all their life through, in this blindness of the sensual man? The word 'sensual man' in the original means the animal man, the man of flesh and blood, of the fleshly reason, and of the carnal will without the Spirit of God. Such, because they have fallen from baptismal grace, is the state of multitudes of baptised Christians.

I ask you, then, to examine yourselves as in God's sight. Have you any of these marks upon you? If you have, then you are grieving the Spirit of your baptism. Perhaps you may have already lost its grace. If you are insensible of these things, it may be that you cannot discern that your baptismal innocence exists no longer, that you have even now the character of your baptism marked upon you for your condemnation, that the grace of the Spirit of God is departed; for 'the Holy Spirit of discipline fleeth from the deceitful, and withdraweth Himself from the thoughts that are without understanding, and will not abide when iniquity enters in.'¹⁹ 'The spiritual man judgeth all things, and himself is judged of no man.'²⁰ Now who is the spiritual man? It is the man

¹⁹ Wisdom i. 5.

²⁰ 1 Cor. ii. 15.

who follows the Spirit of his baptism, who has either kept his baptismal innocence, or, if he had lost it, has received it again by penance; and, living in the holy fear of God, purifies himself, asking daily of the Holy Ghost to sanctify him altogether, in every thought and affection and passion, to illuminate his understanding with a knowledge of truth, to sanctify and cleanse his heart from every taint of sin, to inspire his will with a generous obedience. A man that lives such a life, and is conscious of the supernatural help that is in him, and is faithful to the duties of his state in the world, and discharges them with an exact fidelity, because he does them not for man but for God—a man who remembers continually that he is predestined to eternal life, but that yet he may fall from grace, that this world is not his resting-place, that his home is in eternity, that he is but a stranger, wayfaring upon earth, who keeps himself detached from the world and unspotted by it—such a man lives a supernatural life. Ask yourselves, dear brethren, which of these two lives are you leading? Are you conscious that there is a supernatural life in you? If you are, then you are taking care to feed and sustain it with supernatural grace, with holy sacraments, with prayer, with meditation. You avoid all things which are contrary to that life. And

just as you would avoid a pestilent atmosphere, or as you would not drink of a poisoned well or risk anything which would be hurtful to your bodily life, so do you with constant vigilance avoid the occasions of sin, and all things which are hurtful to your spiritual life and health. Saint John, writing by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, says this : ‘ Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God. Therefore, the world knoweth us not because it knows Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is ; and every man that hath this hope in him sanctifieth himself, even as He also is holy.’²¹ If you realise this your supernatural state, it will be the motive of your daily life.

2. Secondly, we ought to co-operate generously and faithfully with the will of the Holy Spirit that is working in us. You remember that, when the Lord called Samuel in his childhood, at first he did not know the divine voice ; but when Eli bade him to answer : ‘ Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth,’²² he obeyed, and from that time he understood the will of

²¹ 1 S. John iii. 1-3.

²² 1 Kings iii. 10.

God. The voice of the Lord is always calling to you: 'Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man will hear My voice, and will open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me.'²³ All the day long the Spirit of God is in your hearts; all hours of the day He is calling on you to correspond with the will of God, that by it you may be sanctified. But do you correspond with it? You know that if you strike a note of music, all the octave notes will vibrate. Does your heart vibrate in correspondence and harmony with the voice of the Holy Ghost, prompting you to holy thoughts, good works, charitable actions, peace with all men, prayer and piety towards God? No grace that God gives ever fails of its effect, except through our fault. The seeds that fall upon the barren sand can bear no fruit; that which is cast upon the sea cannot strike a root; that which falls upon a mind which is like the troubled sea, or upon a heart which is like the barren sand, will bear no spiritual fruit. Nevertheless, the grace of God in itself is always fruitful; it never fails of its effect, unless we mar it. Are you, then, corresponding with the exuberant graces, which God is always bestowing upon you? Think of what you have received from your childhood. The lights

²³ Apoc. iii. 20.

that have come down on you from heaven all your life long are not more abundant than the graces of the Holy Spirit, which have been bestowed upon you to impart the knowledge of self and the knowledge of God. The showers that water the earth are not more exuberant than the graces of sanctity which God has poured out into your hearts. How have you corresponded with them? Learn, then, brethren; let us all learn, for we all alike have need—and what I say to you I say first to myself—let us learn to have a delicate conscience, to understand promptly, and to correspond, if we can, proportionately; not to receive great graces languidly, and squander one half of them, and correspond faintly with the rest. Try with your whole soul and strength to rise up and to obey, when the grace of God calls you to any higher state or to any better action.

3. Lastly, I will but touch on one other lesson, which is so vital to our salvation, that I would most earnestly pray you to learn it well. Let it be the lasting fruit of all I have attempted hitherto to say. Resolve from this time, with all your spiritual power, to be devout to the Holy Ghost. Pray to have a devotion, personal, constant, daily, to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. In your baptism you were committed to His care. He is your Guide,

your Foster-Father, your Friend, your Counsellor, your Guardian. When the Patriarch Jacob had seen in a vision the ladder which reached up from earth to heaven, and the angels ascending and descending upon it, he woke up filled with a supernatural terror, and said: 'Indeed, God is in this place and I knew it not; this is no other than the house of God, and this the gate of heaven.'²⁴ So would it be with us, if we were to wake up and be conscious that God the Holy Ghost is about us, that He encompasses us behind and before, that He is within us, that He pervades us as the Uncreated Spirit of God alone can do, that our very soul is not so intimately united to our body as He is to our soul; that He is all ear to hear every breathing of our heart, that He is all eye to see every thought which flits across our imagination; that our whole being is open before Him, that 'the Word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, for all things are open and naked to the eyes of Him to Whom we must account.'²⁵ If we only felt this, we should wake up and say: 'Indeed,

²⁴ Gen. xxviii. 17.²⁵ Heb. iv. 12, 13.

God is in this place and I knew it not : all my life long I have been unconscious. Now I know that my own soul is the house of God, and my own heart is to me the gate of heaven.'

Let us then resolve, dear brethren, all we can, to love the Spirit of God, to conform ourselves to His will, to worship him day by day, to pray to Him personally, to place ourselves under His guidance, to beware of disobedience—of those three degrees of disobedience of which He Himself has warned us : 'Grieve not the Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption ;'²⁶ 'Resist not the Spirit ;'²⁷ 'Quench not the Spirit.'²⁸ These are three degrees by which we may fall from His love and from His presence. Beware also not of actual disobedience only, but of that tardy slothful negligence by which you may provoke Him to a just impatience. 'Behold, thou art neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm. I would thou wert either cold or hot.'²⁹ Nothing provokes the Holy Spirit of God, Who is the fire of the love of God, more than the lukewarmness with which we allow His graces and mercies to pass by us, and to pass by us unperceived. Ask, then, of the Holy Spirit of God to give you

²⁶ Eph. iv. 30.

²⁷ Acts vii. 51.

²⁸ 1 Thess. v. 19.

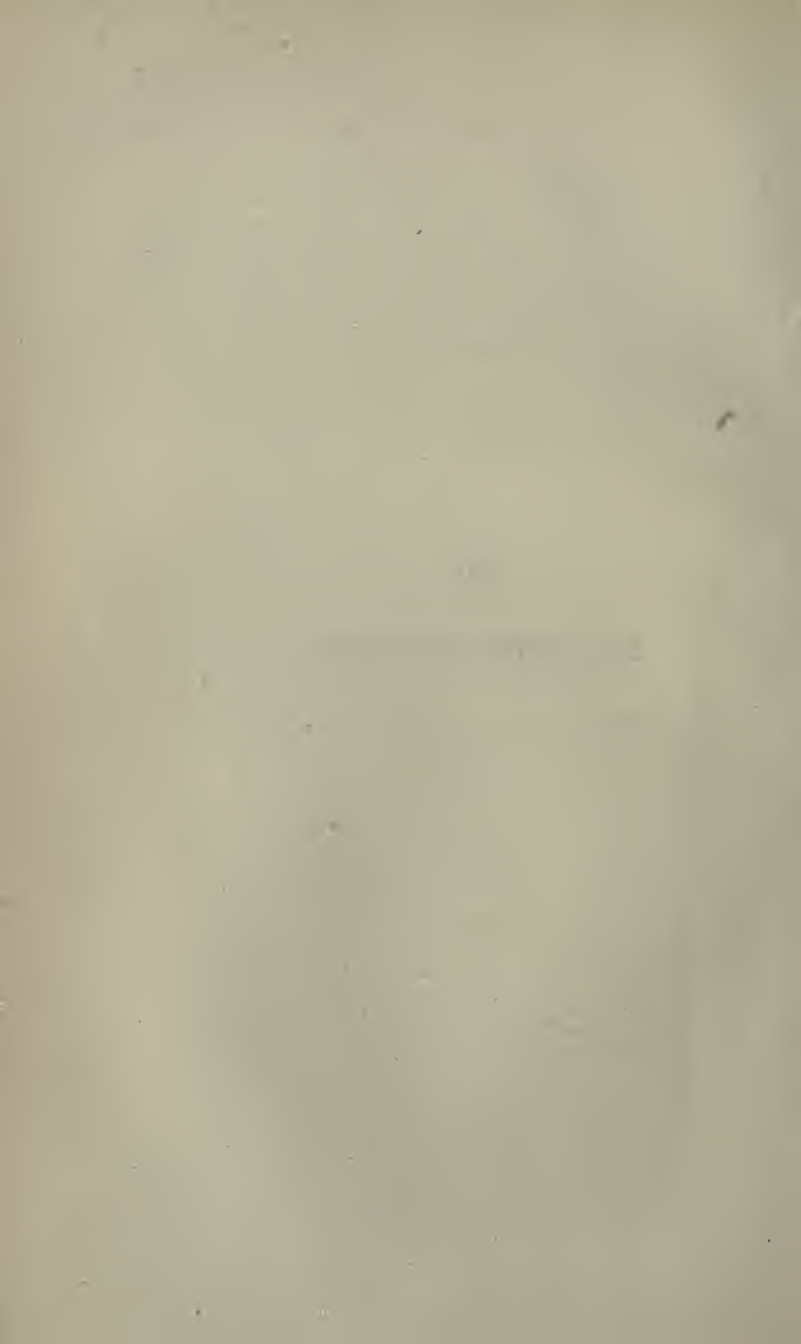
²⁹ Apoc. iii. 15.

light to know Him, to know His presence, to be conscious of His indwelling in your hearts. Say to Him: 'O my God, I give myself to Thee with all my liberty, all my intellect and heart and will. I desire to be bound to Thee; for 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,' no other liberty is true; I desire to be free from the servitude of my own false freedom, which is the worst bondage of the human soul. To be Thy servant is to be in the liberty of the sons of God. They that are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. O Holy Spirit of God, take me as Thy disciple, guide me, illuminate me, sanctify me, bind my hands that I may not do evil, cover my eyes that I may see it no more, sanctify my heart that evil may not rest within me. Be Thou my God, be Thou my Guide: wheresoever Thou leadest me I will go; whatsoever Thou forbiddest I will renounce; and whatsoever Thou commandest, in Thy strength I will do.'



II.

SALVATION BY GRACE.



SALVATION BY GRACE.

We are confident of this very thing, that He Who hath begun the good work in you will perfect the same unto the day of Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS i. 6.

THE greater part of men live as if they had no souls. Of pains and ailments in the body they are keenly conscious: they know at once when they are suffering. But in their souls they may be as lepers white as snow, without the least consciousness of their misery. They live worldly, earthly, sensual lives, without the faintest perception of any spiritual taint or spiritual disease; and they are no more conscious of the existence of their soul than they are of the circulation of their blood. Of those too who are more or less conscious that they have a soul at stake, and that it may be saved or lost eternally, even of these the greater part live as if God did not dwell in them. They are unconscious of the Divine presence: I do not mean in the

world round about them, because it is an axiom of the human reason, that God is everywhere; and the men of this world, except sceptics, who have put their eyes out, will always profess that God is omnipresent. I am not, however, speaking of this external presence of God—I am speaking now of the internal presence of God the Holy Ghost working in the soul. Even they who are Christians in faith and in spiritual light, who are conscious, and are continually saying that they have a soul at stake, even they, too, live without a habitual daily sense that they are never alone: that as the soul is in the body, so God is in the soul. Now this is the truth which I have endeavoured to bring out. We have seen what is the twofold office of the Holy Ghost—the one part of His work is His universal sanctifying presence in the soul of man; the other, His perpetual presence in the mystical Body of Christ. I then drew, as a general conclusion from these truths, that we are in a supernatural state, that God the Holy Ghost dwells in us one by one; that we therefore ought to worship, to adore, to love, to serve the Holy Spirit of God Who abides in us, and makes our soul His dwelling-place. This is the true nature of the grace of God; but it is to be feared that many who are perpetually telling us that we are saved only by grace little know what grace is. The

word grace signifies the free and gratuitous operation of God, but it does not adequately bring out His immediate presence. What I will therefore try to do is to translate the word into its full meaning.

The full meaning of grace is this: the Divine presence and operation of God the Holy Ghost in the soul of man. Where He works He is. We must not forget His presence in His operation, or reduce it to the notion of an agency, or an influence, or, as our unbelievers would say, a force. Grace is of a twofold kind: it is created and uncreated. The created grace is a quality which is infused into the soul. Faith, hope, and charity are qualities poured into our hearts. But the uncreated grace of God is God Himself inhabiting the soul, the Fountain of all other gifts. Therefore, as I have said before, we are in a supernatural state: unless, indeed, we are reprobates, unless we are in mortal sin, for then the Holy Ghost no longer dwells in us. If by any mortal sins of the flesh or of the spirit we have driven the Holy Ghost from our hearts, then, indeed, we are not in a state of grace; nevertheless, we are still in a supernatural state. We are born again, we are regenerate, we are sons of God; we shall be outcast sons of God to all eternity, even in the outer darkness. Even though we be spiritually dead, we are yet in a supernatural

state, because we still have faith in us, and we have also hope ; but because we have not charity, and therefore have not the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost, for that cause we are spiritually dead. They who are in the supernatural state, and living a life of grace, are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the objects of His special love. He perpetually pervades their intellect with the light of faith, and then their heart by the working of charity, and their will by the inspiration of His own ; and from this springs the growth and ripeness of faith, hope, and charity which we receive in our Baptism.

Such, then, is the full and adequate meaning of grace ; and in this sense we must still use the word, because it is the familiar and technical term which pervades our theology : and is to be found also in the New Testament. But we must carefully distinguish its many senses. Theology distinguishes the grace, or the working of the Holy Spirit, into these three kinds. There is what is called preventing grace ; that is, God going before us by His operations in every good thing we do. Just as a guide carries a light to show us our path, so the Spirit of God enlightens us, and leads us in the way of life. But, secondly, it is not enough to lead, unless He help us to follow the light. Those whom He leads He also strengthens.

He goes with them, and gives them the concurrent assistance of His own power. This is His co-operating grace. And, thirdly, He makes perfect that which He has begun, according to the words of the Apostle, who says: 'We are confident of this very thing, that He Who has begun the good work in you will perfect the same unto the day of Jesus Christ.' There are, therefore, three kinds of grace—the preventing grace, which goes before us; the accompanying or co-operating grace, which helps us in our way; and the perfecting grace, which accomplishes and crowns the work of God in us. But these are only three modes of the operation of a Divine Person present in us. I will endeavour, then, to draw this out, not speculatively, but practically: for the guidance of our daily life.

1. God is both the author and the perfecter of our salvation. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. But though our salvation begins in Him, is carried on by Him, and is accomplished by Him, nevertheless our will is actively at work in it from the beginning to the end. There is but one grace in which our will has no part, and that grace is the first. The first grace which God gives to us in Baptism He gives to us when we are unconscious in our mother's

arms ; in this there is no action of our will : but in all the other workings of His grace through all our life our will must bear a part. And therefore, as I have already said, there will be no soul lost eternally that is not lost by want of co-operation of its own will ; and there is no soul that will be saved eternally that has not co-operated with the grace of God in working out its salvation. God, then, begins everything in us, even our natural existence. He created us out of nothing. He foreknew us from all eternity. We were once a thought in the mind of God. It was the love of God which willed to create us ; and His power following His will called us into existence out of the boundless multitude of possible creatures, leaving more than the mind of man can imagine non-existent still. This wonderful work of God's love to us, calling us into existence, was a preventing grace of His sovereign love, wisdom, and goodness towards us. In like manner, God accomplished our redemption before ever we were, before ever we came into being, because He willed His own Son to be incarnate ; and the Incarnate Son shed His Precious Blood for us when eternally He willed to die. When we came into existence, God, having foreknown and predestinated us to grace, called us to Holy Baptism ; and out of the millions and hundreds of mil-

lions of men on the face of the earth we were called to be born again through the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Our Baptism was a predestination. This, then, was a grace bestowed upon us without any will of our own. And if those who are baptised abide in their baptismal innocence, the grace of God is always beforehand with their will, through their whole life, in childhood, boyhood, youth, and manhood, to the end: it always precedes them; they always follow it, and their salvation is made sure by their fidelity in obedience to this preventing grace. The presence of the Holy Ghost, given to them in the unconscious state of infancy, has continually led them in the path of salvation; they have obeyed it; and therefore the faith, piety, charity, and purity of those that keep their baptismal grace are the fruits of a Personal Love and Power preceding every operation of their own will. God began the good work in them; and so long as they put no bar across His work, He has been perfecting it in them. In those who grow up in their baptismal innocence there is also an unconsciousness of evil. They are ignorant of a multitude of things which the men of the world think it wisdom to know. But that knowledge is a canker and a stain: it may even be the destruction of the soul. Moreover, those who keep their baptismal innocence are not only

unconscious of evil, they are even unconscious of any good in themselves, because, in proportion as they are humble and united with God, in that proportion they are sanctified, and, in proportion as they are sanctified, they ascribe all good to God alone, and nothing to themselves. Well, as it is with those who grow up in their first innocence, so it is in those who are converted. They also are brought back from their sins by the preventing grace of God. Those who have fallen away, it may be, even from the Christian faith, or those who have violated the law of God, those who have left the house of their Heavenly Father—wandering out into the far country, and have wasted the grace of their Baptism in an evil life—when they return to God, what is it that brings them back again? It may be the case with some who hear me, who have come back to God after all their miseries, or who were born out of the light of truth, and have now entered into the full illumination of faith. You can perhaps remember what your past life was once: now it is altogether changed. What wrought that change in you? From what source came the first light in your reason which showed you where you were, and by what dangers you were encompassed? From what hand came that first sting in your conscience that made you fear to look at yourself, and

desire to hide yourself from the eye of God? From what will came that impulse in your heart which made you say: 'I had rather die at the foot of the Cross; I had rather fall down on my face in the brightness of God's presence, though all the stains and wounds of my soul will be revealed to me in an intolerable light—rather this than die as I am. I will arise and go to my Father: I will go into the confessional: I will go and tell the worst against myself: I will keep nothing back: I will anticipate the day of Judgment: everything that will be told against me by the accuser then shall be told by my own lips now.' Dear brethren, what brought you to that resolution? Perhaps it was some word that you heard in a sermon—some preacher spoke and touched your heart, so that you could never rest afterwards; some book that you picked up, as you say, by chance—a mere sentence in a page of it went to your heart, and you had never any peace till you had gone to accuse yourself in a true confession; or it may be some great sickness struck you down, and, in the danger of impending death, you saw yourself as God saw you; or perhaps it was the death of some one dear to you that opened your eyes. You thought it was these chances or accidents, or earthly things, that made the change in you. No; God was working by these things: He was behind the

veil. These were but the instruments He made use of: He was hiding Himself behind them ; and through them He was working the grace of conversion in your soul. It was 'the finger of God touching the heart.'¹ It was His doing : a personal action of the love of God and of the Holy Ghost upon your intellect, and upon your conscience, and upon your heart, and upon your will. Through the whole of our spiritual life, whether innocent or penitent, this work of salvation springs from God. It is His grace preventing even our first thoughts of good.

2. But, as I have already said, the grace of God co-operates with us or works with us. I cannot make this clearer than by putting before you what I cannot doubt most of you have seen. You have seen a lock in a river; and you have watched how, when the lock is shut, the water rises against the gate. It presses with its full weight against the gate until a hand—it may be the hand of a child, with such facility it is accomplished—opens the gate of the lock; at once the flood pours in, the level of the water rises, the stream runs strong, and carries forward those that float upon it, almost without effort of their own. The grace of God, that is, the power of the Holy Ghost, is always pressing against our will, always in

¹ Conc. Trid. sess. vi. cap. v. : 'Tangente Deo cor hominis.'

contact with our heart, moving us onward towards God, impelling us to good. And this pressure of the Holy Ghost against our will waits only for our will to open: 'Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear My voice and open the door, I will go in to him and sup with him, and he with Me.'² The Holy Spirit of God is waiting at the door all the day long: in every action we do He is pressing upon our will to make us do good, and when we are doing good to make us do better. But He waits for our will to correspond. He never forces it. The will must be willing. If we only open the gate, the full tide of His grace will flow in, and uniting itself with all our powers, will elevate our personal will above itself, strengthen it with supernatural force, and carry it onward with facility and speed. Now, this co-operation of the Spirit of God in us is followed also by an increase of grace. Those that believe, if they follow the light of faith, become stronger and more illuminated in faith; those that hope, and act in hope, become confirmed and matured into confidence; those that live in charity, and exercise the graces of charity, become fruitful in all its works, and, in that measure, sanctified with the love of God and their neighbour. So it is with humility, and piety, and self-denial, and

² Apoc. iii. 20.

generosity, and with all the graces of the Christian character. In proportion as you willingly accept and use the help of the Spirit of God in the duties and works to which you are prompted by these several graces, these graces themselves will be increased and multiplied, enlarged and deepened. And, lastly, the Holy Spirit of God, dwelling in the souls of the faithful, deals with us as we deal with children. When you teach a child to read, your mature intelligence guides the intelligence of the child. Your intelligence elevates the child's intelligence. What the child cannot understand you explain; and the intelligence of the child rises up to yours. As a lesser flame rises up and mingles with a greater, so the intelligence of the child is elevated, and its light is enlarged, by your intelligence presiding over it. If you teach a child to write, you lay your hand upon its hand and guide it in the formation of the letters. If you attempt to teach a child anything, you supply attention. You give it self-control; a fixedness of will; you keep the mind of the child steady and intent upon what it is doing. Unless your mature will assists the weak will of the child, even the intelligence of the child will not unfold its native power. If the child will not attend, or if the child will not work with you by a will to understand, much more if the

child withdraws its hand from your guidance, it can learn nothing. It must co-operate with you even to begin, and it must work with you to advance; and as it works together with you, in that measure it advances in knowledge. So it is with the soul. The Holy Spirit of God illuminates us, and if we receive that illumination, we receive from Him larger measures of light; but the condition on which we are illuminated is, that we co-operate with the light we already have. The way in which we learn the science of God, in all its greatest principles, and all its least details, is by following the working of the Spirit of God in our hearts. The whole, then, of our sanctification is a personal action of God dwelling in our soul, and unfolding the intelligence and the will to a conformity with His own.

3. And, lastly, Saint Augustine says that ‘God crowns His own work in us;’³ that is to say, the work of our sanctification and salvation is of God from first to last, from the beginning to the end. God crowns it when He makes it perfect. He puts the crown upon the head of His own work in us when He sustains us to a holy death. Unless God Himself makes our salvation perfect, we shall never be saved;

³ ‘Sua dona coronabit non merita tua.’ S. Aug. in Ps. lxx. enarratio, p. 551, ed. Ben., Antwerp, 1700.

unless we have the gift of perseverance, we shall never endure to the end. And this gift of perseverance is the crown of our sanctification. It is not in our own power to stand for one day, much less to hold out to the last. Perseverance is a gift of God. It comes from His sovereign grace, and He gives it to those who co-operate with Him ; and on them He bestows it as a free grace of His love. You know that if we were to shoot a thousand arrows at a mark, every arrow might hit that mark ; it is physically possible. There is nothing to hinder such a feat. But we know with a perfect certainty that out of that thousand arrows many will never strike the mark. They will fall short, or go beyond, or swerve on either side. And why ? Because that which is physically possible is defeated by some infirmity, either of the eye, or of the hand, or of our posture, or of our poise and balance, or something in the bow or in the string, or it is a current in the wind, or some undetected flaw in the circumstances of the action. Any one of these will divert the arrow's flight. So it is in all our moral life. That which we may do is often not done. It fails through our own defects. God indeed gives us sufficient grace to fulfil what is necessary for our salvation : and though it is possible for us never to fail, it is perfectly certain that in

many things we shall fail. If, then, there were not a special grace of God watching over and taking up His work in us, it would fall from our hands. Through our weakness it never would be made perfect.

Now the gift of perseverance is twofold. First, it is a duty on our part; and next, it is a gift on God's part. It is a duty on our part, as our Lord has said: 'He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved;' ⁴ meaning to say, that no man shall be saved who does not so endure. The duty of perseverance on our part is made up of three things: of fidelity in following the Spirit of God; of fervour, that is exactness, regularity, punctuality in the discharge of our duties towards God and our neighbour; and lastly, of delicacy of conscience, so that our ear is prompt to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, and our eye is quick to see what He requires of us. When the conscience is delicate and sensitive, we listen, hear, and respond. When its sight is open and clear, we watch for the tokens, and rise up quickly at the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They who have fidelity, fervour, and delicacy of conscience will surely persevere, because God will bestow upon them the gift of perseverance, the sovereign and crowning grace added over and above all the other graces He has bestowed. The gift of persever-

⁴ S. Matt. xxiv. 13.

ance also, I may say, consists of three things, which are these : First of all, a watchful providence guarding us round about. We do not know the dangers that surround us day and night. We do not know how many fiery shafts of the wicked one have been cast at us in our most unguarded moments. They have been warded off from us by a shield unseen. We shall never know till we are in the light of eternity, before the Throne of God, over how many pitfalls and gulfs where there was no bridge to bear us, through what perils ready to fall upon us, we have passed safely, and unconsciously, because the Spirit of God was our Guide. To be shielded on either side and to be protected from all sin is that which we pray for every day in the words: 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' Our Heavenly Father fulfils that petition, and He guards us from ten thousand dangers of which we are not aware. Next, He leads us in a path that is safe, in the path of which the Prophet Isaias speaks when he says: 'There shall be a path and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it; and this shall be unto you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein.'⁵ God will lead all who are faithful in that safe path of holiness. And, lastly,

⁵ Isaias xxxv. 8.

just as we keep a lamp alight by careful watching, and by pouring in fresh oil when the wick begins to burn dim, so the Holy Ghost lovingly and tenderly watches over the state of our hearts. When He sees there is spiritual decay, and that the light is declining, that our charity is less, or that our piety is faint, He pours in larger measures of His grace, whereby the spiritual life within us is kept vigorous and strong, and its decays are continually repaired. They who have this gift of holy perseverance are thereby kept to the end. Our salvation, therefore, depends upon a chain of grace, link within link. The first grace was the grace given to us in Baptism, when we were unconscious; the last grace is that which is bestowed upon us out of the sovereign love of God, keeping us to the end. God Himself holds the first grace and the last in His own hand; and that golden chain of mercy is let down within our reach. We must hold fast by it; and we must hold fast by every link as it passes through our hands, co-operating with every grace as He gives it to us—if not with the grace of obedience and sanctity, then at least with the grace of sorrow and contrition; and so persevering, God will accomplish the work He began in us until the day of Jesus Christ.

1. And now, brethren, from all that I have said

certain truths of a very practical kind directly flow. The first is this, that the work of our salvation, which the Holy Ghost is accomplishing in us, can never fail on God's part. The whole creation and the life of all created things is sustained by the presence and the providence of God. The ruin and the wreck of all things comes not from God, but from man. So in our spiritual life God is always pouring into our hearts more and more of His grace. If we do not bar and hinder His operations in us, He will accomplish His own work. It is we alone who hinder it. It is we alone who can wreck it. God never forsakes those whom He has once called. He may at last judicially reject them; but only after long patience, an ample trial, a judicial process, and an inevitable judgment. As He rejected Pharaoh for his impenitence, as it may be He rejected Ananias and Sapphira, as He rejected Judas, so He may reject us. If we harden ourselves against His grace by sins of the flesh, or, what is more subtil and more stealthy, by sins of the spirit, which are even more deadly, because more Satanic, and harder to be cured, then, indeed, God may reject us judicially; but God never forsakes anybody, as the holy Council of Trent teaches, who does not forsake Him first.⁶ 'The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.'⁷ His will is to

Conc. Trid. sess. vi. cap. xi.

⁷ Rom. xi. 29.

save us; and He never changes that will. We may defeat the purpose of His mercy; but then the failure comes from us, and not from Him. This is the first truth.

2. The second is, that though our salvation will not fail on God's part, it may fail on ours; and if it does fail, it will fail by our own will. In this there is both something very fearful and something very consoling. It is very fearful to think that we have it in our power to destroy the whole work of God in our souls; but it is very consoling to know that if our will is upright and faithful, nothing can destroy that work: even the gates of hell cannot destroy it. All the legions of the Evil One have no power over a Christian child who is faithful to its baptismal grace. A Christian child in its baptismal innocence is as safe as the child who was in the arms of our Divine Saviour.

The danger, then, from our own will is this. It is our will that determines our whole destiny. You know, brethren, the difference between the features of your face and your countenance. God made your features, but you made your countenance. Your features were His work, and He gives to every man his own natural face—all different from each other, and yet all of one type. But the countenances of

men are far more diverse even than their features. Some men have a lofty countenance, some have a lowering countenance, or a worldly or ostentatious vain-glorious countenance, or a scornful countenance, or a cunning and dissembling countenance. We know men by their look. We read men by looking at their faces—not at their features, their eyes or lips, because God made these; but at a certain cast and motion, and shape and expression, which their features have acquired. It is this that we call the countenance. And what makes this countenance? The inward and mental habits; the constant pressure of the mind, the perpetual repetition of its acts. You can detect at once a vain-glorious, or conceited, or foolish person. It is stamped on their countenance. You can see at once on the faces of the cunning, the deep, the dissembling, certain corresponding lines traced on the face as legibly as if they were written. Well, now, as it is with the countenance so it is with the character. God gave us our intellect, our heart, and our will; but our character is something different from the will, the heart, and the intellect. The character is that intellectual and moral texture into which all our life long we have been weaving up the inward life that is in us. It is the result of the habitual or prevailing use

we have been making of our intellect, heart, and will. We are always at work like the weaver at a loom; the shuttle is always going, and the woof is always growing. So we are always forming a character for ourselves.

It is plain matter-of-fact truth that everybody grows up in a certain character; some are good, some bad, some excellent, and some unendurable. Every character is formed by habits. If a man is habitually proud, or vain, or false, and the like, he forms for himself a character like in kind. It is the permanent bias formed by continually acting in a particular way; and this acting in a particular way comes from the continual indulgence of thoughts and wishes of a particular tendency. The loom is invisible within, and the shuttle is ever going in the heart; but it is the will that throws it to and fro. The character shows itself outwardly, but it is wrought within. Every habit is a chain of acts, and every one of those acts was a free act of the will. There was a time when the man had never committed the sin which first became habitual, and then formed his abiding character. For instance, some people are habitually false. We sometimes meet with men whose word we can never take, and for this reason. They have lost the perception of truth and falsehood. The distinc-

tion is effaced from their minds. They do not know when they are speaking truly and when they are speaking falsely. The habit of paltering, and distinguishing, and concealing, and putting forward the edge of a truth instead of showing boldly the full face of it, at last leads men into an insincerity so habitual, that they really do not know when they speak the truth or not. They bring this state upon themselves. But there was a time when those same men had never told a lie. The first they told was perhaps with only half an act of the will; but gradually they grew to do it deliberately, then they added lie to lie with a full deliberation, then with a frequency which formed a habit; and when it became habitual to them, then it became unconscious. Or take another example; men who, perhaps, had never tasted anything in their lives that could turn their brain have at last acquired a habit of habitual drunkenness. Now, dear brethren, do not suppose by the words habitual drunkenness I mean only that sort of gross reeling intoxication by which men openly in the light of day shame themselves in the street. I wish there were no other habits of intoxication than these. There are men and women who live a refined life, and in the full light of society, undetected, who habitually cloud their understanding, and habitually

undermine the moral powers of their will, by the use of stimulants. This evil is growing in these days on every side. It is making a havoc of men, of women, and, through the folly of parents, even of young children. I must openly say that in this the imprudence, the folly, the weak indulgence of parents, their want of vigilance over their sons and daughters—I am speaking, remember, of the upper classes—is such, that they seem to me to be blind or infatuated.

There are at this time even young women who habitually drink as much as would intoxicate a man; God only knows the lives of misery and the deaths of stupor or of madness to which they are advancing. Now there was a time when they had never so much as tasted intoxicating drink. There was a time when, with a certain fear, a shrinking, a consciousness of doing a wrong or doubtful act, they began to taste, and then to drink, at first sparingly, then freely, until gradually growing confident and bold, and the temptation acquiring a great fascination, and the taste being vitiated, a craving has been excited, and the delusion of a fancied need has come upon them. They have gone on little by little, so insensibly, that they have not become aware, until a bondage has been created which, unless God by an almost miraculous grace shall set them free, they will never break.

What I have given in those two examples of a habit insensibly formed I might give in everything else. It applies equally to anger, jealousy, prodigality, profuseness, running into debt, and others I need not name. I will only take one more example, and that shall be the sin of sloth. There is nothing which grows so insensibly on souls in their spiritual life, and it is mortal as the chill which in northern regions comes upon the traveller before he is aware. We are told that the fatal cold creeps on almost with a sense of pleasure, until it numbs the whole tide of life, and death takes possession before the victim is aware. So it is with spiritual sloth. It begins by little omissions, little neglects, little slacknesses, until at last the careless man gets bolder. His conscience grows easy even in making great omissions of duty, first once in a way, then a second, then a third, and then more frequently, until these omissions knit themselves into a habit. And yet all the while every one of these actions was quite as much an act of the free will as it would be for me at this moment to cease to speak. If I ceased to speak, it would be because that I have determined in my mind to speak no longer. You would not say that this was an act of omission. It would be the deliberate act of my will; so are all those acts out of which the most dangerous

habits are formed. As I have said, even an act of omission is an act of the will. If you were to cast yourself down on the ground, it would be an act of your will; if you were to refuse to get up, it would be equally so. To lie there would be, in one sense, an act of omission; but that act of omission is a result at the time of the will not to use the power you have to get up. So people who begin to neglect their prayers, their confessions, their Communions, their self-examination, the Holy Mass, the presence and love of God, are all along committing distinct acts of the will. These are not negative things, they are positive acts; and, if we so begin as I have said, those acts will knit themselves together into a chain. Saint Augustine said, speaking of himself in his youth, while he was in habits of sin, that they bound him like a fetter. He says: 'I was bound by a chain which I had made for myself. No other man made it. I was bound *mea ferrea voluntate*, by the chain of my own iron will.' What but this is eternal death? What is the eternal loss of God? It is the final state of a soul which has lost its hold on God here by its own wilful acts. Bound in 'ropes of darkness,' as Saint Peter says, when the time of grace is over, and the day of probation is gone down, and judgment is passed, the soul that has deprived itself of God in this world is

cast out of the sight of God hereafter, and confirmed in the intensity of its variance, and in its enmity against God, Whom it can never see, because it has bound its own eyes with the bandage of wilful blindness, and all its powers with the iron fetters of its own deliberate will. Therefore we can never fail of our salvation except by our own free will; and our will never fails except through our own fault.

Let us sum up what has been said. Saint Paul writes: 'We are confident of this very thing, that God, Who has begun the good work, will perfect the same to the day of Jesus Christ.' Carry away with you this lesson of confidence in God. Confidence means hope resting on His goodness; trust reposing on His love. Cast your whole weight upon it; throw the whole burden of your soul upon God. He loves you, He created you, He redeemed you, He has chosen you, He has called you to His grace, He has been working in you from your Baptism to this hour. If you wish to know why you may confide in God's love to you not only in the general sense of confidence, because He has mercy upon all, but why you may confide in God's love to you personally and by name, and one by one—lay to heart these motives of trust and gratitude. Remember what you were once. How many who hear me can recollect the time when,

through sin, they were dead before God ; when they were, as I said in the beginning, 'like the leper white as snow ;' when they were walking for years in darkness, without the knowledge of God, turning their back upon His light, in bondage to manifold sins. Remember who and what it was that brought you back to life. Your resurrection from that state of spiritual death was as much a miracle of God's supernatural power as the raising of Lazarus from the grave. God had mercy and love to you. He raised you from death, and loosed you from your winding-sheet of habitual sin. Confide in Him, therefore, for the future. You did not then know what He was doing for you. You know it now. It is the pledge of what He will do for you hereafter. He Who has begun that good work, if you do not thwart it, will make it perfect. Again, see what you are at this moment. I trust that you who hear me are living the life of grace, in union with God, in prayer, in self-knowledge, in habitual confession, and in communion in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. I will not doubt that you are in full friendship with the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord through the working of His grace in your hearts. If so, what brought you to this state? Who brought on the spring after the winter, and the summer after the spring? Who made you to be

what you are now? It was not yourselves. It was the love and the grace of the Holy Spirit working in you; chiefly when you knew it not. Think also what you may be hereafter. You may be for ever cast away. You may fall again into that spiritual death from which God has once raised you. You may fall away from Him. Unless you be faithful, I must almost say you will. On the other hand, you may be saints. You may persevere to the end. You may grow in the light of faith all the days of your life, until upon your death-bed you will perhaps see the first rays of the presence of God. You may grow in the confidence of hope, until the calmness, and the sweetness, and the brightness shed abroad in your soul shall be a foretaste of the eternal bliss of God. All this is within your reach: God has begun it in you. He will accomplish it, if you will work together with Him to the end.

Therefore, dear brethren, walk before God in holy fear. We so intimately depend upon His grace, that if we are not faithful we may in a moment fall from it. Have a holy fear of consciously doing anything that will grieve Him: a holy fear of going anywhere, entering into any engagements, amusements, societies, friendships, intimacies, which can come between God and your soul. Have a holy fear of everything

which hinders the growth of the work of God in you. Ask for a great humility. ‘He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.’⁸ Remember what you are now. Remember what you have been. Look at the scars, and seams, and wounds which your past life has left on you. Remember what God sees in you at this moment. Remember that the best things you ever did in your life in His sight are nothing worth, that you are unprofitable servants. Remember, also, that you are the creatures of His hands; and as creatures you ought to glorify Him, as the sun by its brightness, and the fruit-tree by its fruit in due season. But what light and what fruit has He had from you? Be therefore humble in the sight of God. But be joyful at the thought of His infinite mercies. They have been round about you like the waves of the sea all your life, and to this hour. Praise Him for His manifold gifts. Do not only pray for what you want, but give Him thanks for what you have received. Praise Him as you will in eternity; for our whole eternity will be praise. There will be prayer no longer. When all are filled with God, what more will there be to ask? We shall praise God for ever; and praise is to know Him, to love Him, to look up into His face, to contemplate His beauty, to

⁸ 1 Cor. x. 12.

rejoice in Him for His great glory, to pray Him to glorify Himself more and more in all the world, to hallow His own Name, to hasten His kingdom, to hasten the time when men shall do His will on earth as it is done in heaven ; above all, that these things may be made perfect in you. The grace of the Holy Ghost is in you. And grace is better than life, as the soul is precious above the body, and eternity above time. Every truth of faith is a light that comes from God ; every spark of charity comes from the fire of the Holy Ghost. Grace is the finger of God upon the soul. It is also a participation of the Divine nature. It is the presence of the Sanctifier in us. You are His temples, and His dwelling-place. Be holy therefore in body and in spirit. It is but a little time, and the veil which is between you and Him will part asunder and vanish away. You see Him now by the vision of faith ; in a little while you will see Him by the vision of glory ; and then you will be like Him, ‘ for we shall see Him as He is.’⁹

⁹ 1 S. John iii. 2.

III.

THE VIRTUE OF FAITH.



THE VIRTUE OF FAITH.

Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

ROMANS x. 17.

WE have defined grace to be a gift of God, infused by the Holy Ghost into the soul ; supernatural, that is, not due to us, nor contained within the limits of our natural perfection, but superadded by the free sovereignty and love of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ. The rational soul of man is the dwelling-place of grace. We are thereby sanctified, united with God, and by perseverance made perfect. Such is the nature of grace. It is the spiritual work of the Holy Ghost present in us. Now the first of all the gifts or operations of grace in us is faith. I purpose therefore to take this first in order, and hereafter we will go on to hope, which springs from faith, and to charity, which springs from faith and

hope; then to our justification—that is, our union with God and His indwelling in the soul; and afterwards to the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Saint Paul says to the Romans that ‘Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.’¹ In order to understand the meaning of these words, turn to the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He begins in the opening of that chapter by saying: ‘Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen as yet,’—that is to say, the things which are future and out of sight are the subject-matter of faith: and faith is that inward act of the soul whereby we realise the things which we hope for, and anticipate the things which we do not see. He then draws out in that eleventh chapter the catalogue of the saints of God, and shows how it was by faith that the servants of God in the Old Testament pleased God. ‘Without faith,’ he declares, ‘it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him.’ He then goes on to say Abel offered a better sacrifice to God than Cain, through faith. Henoch walked with God through faith. Noe for one hundred and twenty years built the ark in

¹ Rom. x. 17.

faith. Abraham went out from his own country in faith. And so through the whole roll and lineage of the saints and martyrs from the beginning, faith in God and in the world to come was the law of their life and of their salvation. They served God not by sight, nor by the light of nature, but by the light of God, by the gift of the Holy Ghost. By faith, then, we must know and serve Him, for 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.'²

From the beginning, the Holy Spirit of God, as we have already seen, has dwelt in every created soul and wrought in every man born into this world. No soul will be cast out of the peace of God into eternal darkness which might not, if it had only put forth the will, have dwelt with God for ever. God casts no one away. He deprives no soul whom He has made of the grace of salvation. Even throughout the heathen world the Spirit of God is present working in the hearts of men. If they fail of eternal life, the failure is in their own will, and not in the will of God.

From the beginning of the world, the Spirit of God has been leading men on towards faith and the knowledge of God, therefore towards eternal life. Since the coming of the Son of God by incarnation:

² Heb. xi. 6.

into the world He has been drawing men towards the full revelation of the kingdom of God, of justification, and of incorporation with Himself in His mystical Body. To the question, *Quid est fides*—‘What is faith?’—Saint Thomas answers, *Credere quod non vides*—‘To believe what you do not see.’ We will take this as our definition of faith, under limitations which I will show hereafter.

Now there are three things which are essential to divine faith. First, it is a gift of God, by the grace of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, the matter or material object of faith is the truth revealed by God. Thirdly, the reason why we believe it, or the formal object of faith, is the authority of God Himself. These are the three elements which constitute divine faith.

1. Now, first of all, faith, as Saint Paul tells the Ephesians,³ is a gift of God; and this he says lest any man shall ascribe his salvation to himself; lest he should conceive that his knowledge of God comes from the light of his own intellect, or that his moral superiority over the heathen comes from culture and not from grace. The Apostle says, ‘By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves—it is the gift of God, lest any man glory:’ that is

³ Eph. ii. 8.

to say, though faith is the most rational and the most strictly intellectual act, though it is the highest intellectual act of which the reason is capable, it is not an act of its own power alone. Reason goes before faith, and accompanies it and pervades it always. The prelude or preamble of faith is a process of reason. But the last act of reason must be full and complete before the first act of faith can be made. By the last act of reason I mean this: the evidence of Christianity convinces me that it is a divine revelation. And the first act of faith is to say: therefore I believe it. The act of belief contains in it a light of the Holy Spirit of God, illuminating the reason, moving the will, and kindling in the heart a love of the truth. This grace, which God gave in measure throughout the whole world before the Incarnation, He gives now in fulness to every regenerate child. It is given in Baptism by the infusion of grace into the soul. Faith, hope, and charity are infused into the soul of every baptised infant. As by nature every human soul has reason and memory and will, which three faculties are implanted in the soul by its creation, so faith, hope, and charity are infused into the soul in regeneration by supernatural grace. They thenceforward reside in the soul; and as we call an infant a rational being because by

nature it possesses reason, so we count a baptised infant one of the faithful because it possesses the infused virtue of faith. And this grace of faith, which is in us from our regeneration, is developed by exercise, just as the reason which we have from our birth is developed by culture. And as the whole power of numbers lies potentially in the reason of a child, as fire lies in a flint, needing only to be elicited, so in the soul of a regenerate child there is the power of faith, which needs only instruction and exercise to unfold it. Saint Paul speaks of another kind of faith which is a fruit of the Holy Ghost.⁴ But this is not the theological virtue or power of belief which is infused into all the regenerate; it is a mature habit and pious facility of belief, an habitual consciousness of the presence of God, of the unseen world, of the relation of God to our own soul and our responsibility to Him, of eternity, of judgment, of reward, and of punishment to come. Such, then, is the first element of the virtue of faith—it is a supernatural grace infused into the soul whereby we have the light and the will to believe.

2. Secondly, the matter that we believe is the word of God. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.' If we believe the word

⁴ Gal. v. 23.

of man, it is a mere human faith. If we believe the word of historians, it is still no more than a human faith. We believe because we trust the evidence, or because we trust in historical criticism. Call this evidence, or criticism, or what you will, but faith it is not. Faith springs from a divine grace, and rests upon the word of God. Just as the eye is so formed and fitted that it needs the objects of the visible world to terminate upon, and as light is the condition of sight, so is it with this grace of faith. The unseen world, which contains the objects of faith, is necessary to the exercise of faith, and we know them only from the light of the revelation of God. Saint Paul says, in this eleventh chapter of the Hebrews,⁵ that without faith we should not have known how to please God. The light of reason by itself, indeed, suffices to demonstrate the existence of God as an intellectual problem; but over and above that demonstration comes the light of faith, which lighteth every man that cometh into this world. By this we know that God is, and that He is a Rewarder of men. The creation we might indeed metaphysically reason out; but God has revealed the fact that He made the heaven and the earth. We might indeed, from our moral nature, conceive

⁵ Heb. xi. 6.

that we should one day be judged either for punishment or reward, but God has revealed the fact of judgment to come. We should not indeed have known that after death the body would rise again if God had not revealed the fact. From the nature of the human soul and an expectation of the future we might have believed its immortality, but God has revealed that the soul shall never die. We thereby know it by faith. Therefore these great truths and phenomena of the natural order are also part of the revelation of God. But this is not the power, or faculty, or virtue, which we intend when we speak of divine faith. The object of this is not the natural world, but the revelation which God made through Jesus Christ. We speak of the divine truths and divine facts which have been revealed to us by the coming of the Holy Ghost. We speak of the manifestation of God in the flesh, and of the new creation into which we are elevated by being born again of the Spirit. Here is the subject-matter of faith, and it is partly written and partly unwritten. We have the record of parts of it in the Holy Scriptures. But the whole world has become the scripture of this word of God. Saint Paul therefore, in this same place, says : ‘ Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved ; but how shall they call upon

Him in Whom they have not believed, or how shall they believe Him of Whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher ?⁶ Wheresoever the Church spread, there the word of God was made known to the nations of the world, and the whole Church throughout the world, from east to west, became as it were one wide scripture of God written on the hearts and in the minds of men. Saint Irenæus says that many nations had never seen the written Scriptures, but yet had believed the revelation of Jesus Christ, because it was written on their hearts by the Spirit dwelling in them. Therefore the subject-matter of faith is the word, that is, the revealed truth of God.

3. Now there are two things necessary to a doctrine of faith or to an act of Catholic faith. One is, that God shall have revealed unto His Apostles the truth that we believe; and the other is, that His Church should teach it. This, shortly, is the reason *why* we believe. Every Catholic child is taught to say day by day an act of faith such as this: 'O my God, I believe all that Thou hast revealed,' for these two reasons, 'because Thou art the truth, and canst neither deceive nor be deceived;' or, as Saint Augustine says, 'We believe because God is

⁶ Rom. x. 13, 14, 18.

the truth—*Deus est veritas et verax;*’ He is the true God, truth Himself, and He is veracious and He cannot deceive us. It is therefore necessary that our faith should terminate upon the authority of God, and if our faith terminates upon the authority of God, it is impossible that we can err. We have an infallible reason for believing, because it is the authority of God Himself Who teaches us what to believe.

And now let us see, in passing, what is the consequence of rejecting this principle. How can they make acts of faith who misinterpret the revelation of God; who criticise it by their own opinions; who twist and turn and torture His revealed word into their own sense? These are not divine acts, but human; they are acts rather of unbelief than of faith. The word of God is the word of God only in the sense in which God spoke it. The word of God turned and tortured and twisted by the criticism of the individual mind becomes the word of man—it ceases to be the word of God. How, then, can they make acts of faith who, taking the revelation of God apart from the authority of the Church of God, interpret it for themselves and against the teaching of that authority? The material object of faith ceases to exist. Scripture misinterpreted ceases to be the

Scripture. The greatest of modern impostures, and I will say the master error of modern heresies, is what is paraded as scientific history and scientific criticism in the matter of revelation. In what does it consist? I, an uninspired, unaided critic, take these human documents—which in the first place are not inspired, and, next, for the authenticity of which there is no certain guarantee, inasmuch as they have been handed down in various languages and in various lands, without any responsible custody or witness of their genuine text—nevertheless, I take them in hand, and I interpret them without rule except my own, without a judge except myself, and without a guide except the light of my own understanding; I subject them absolutely to my own criticism; and then, out of an arbitrary and subjective process such as this, I tell the world that the Council of the Vatican erred from the truth, and I tell the whole Church on earth that it has departed from the revelation it received from God. Surely this is a form of insanity. It is a fatuity which has inflated the ‘men of culture,’ as they love to be called. It is Gnosticism risen again from the dead. To do this a man ought to be the twelve Apostles or at least the Vicar of Jesus Christ. But this barefaced form of human vain-glory is too manifest to be dangerous

to many. A few professors and a handful who worship them are all whom it has led astray.

But there are much more subtil forms and shades of this illusion. I sincerely respect zealous and earnest men who, knowing the Bible to be the word of God, and finding it full of light and sweetness, think that it is enough for them to take that divine word alone, and to read it for themselves. They are nearer to the Fountain. There have been doubtless in every age multitudes of humble and pious men who, having been born out of the light of the Catholic faith, and knowing no better, have taken the Bible as their sole rule of life, so far as they could understand it. I sincerely respect all such, and for this reason: they submit themselves with all their heart to every word that they can understand in that divine Scripture, and if they could know it better and understand it more fully they would obey it with all their sincerity and with all their soul. But we must not forget the falseness of the principle in the goodness of these people. The principle is visibly erroneous. The endless contradictions and the steady diminution of truth among those who go by that principle would be sufficient to show that it is not God's way of faith. Unless the divine Scripture be read with the light of the day of Pentecost

upon its page, there is no divine and unerring interpretation. For there is no channel through which that light descends to us but only the one Church of God. From no other interpreter can we learn the true meaning of Holy Scripture. Through no channel but the Church alone can we receive the perfect material object of faith—that is, the whole revelation of Jesus Christ. A fragmentary Christianity may be put together by texts of Scripture truly understood; but the whole revelation of Pentecost can be known only in and through the Church. A correct interpretation of many parts of Holy Scripture may be attained without the guidance of the Church, but a divine certainty that such interpretations are correct cannot be attained without it. The Church received the interpretation of the Book before the Book was written; for it had the whole revelation in custody before the Scriptures were committed to its charge. It is the sole witness and guardian both of the meaning and of the Book, and it is itself both the interpreter and the interpretation; present, visible, and perpetual.

But there is, again, a still more subtil form of this dependence upon human authority and collective private judgment. Let me suppose a thing that has hitherto never been, a thing which it is

every day more manifestly certain can never come to pass. Let us suppose that the Church of England—so called—were perfectly unanimous in the doctrines which it teaches. I would to God it were so. I lament over the steady disintegration, the rapid dissolution, the certain approaching disappearance off the face of England of that almost venerable fragment of our ancient Christianity. Suppose for a moment that there were in its teaching even of the truth, I will say of the Holy Trinity or of the Incarnation, a perfect unanimity. Would any man living believe in its teaching because of its authority? Would he believe that a doctrine emanating from an even unanimous decision of that body was an infallible decision? No man would believe it. And for this reason: the Church of England has disclaimed infallibility. In putting forth its decisions it accompanies them with a commentary which disclaims all infallibility—nay, which denies the existence of any infallible teacher in the world. It opposes the Holy Catholic Church for this very reason, because the Catholic and Roman Church claims to be infallible. But faith needs a divine authority, and a divine authority must be infallible. It is only playing with terms and using words of no meaning if we speak of a divine authority which is not infallible. Any

teacher, be it man or corporate body, which disclaims infallibility cannot be a divine teacher.

Put these two texts in juxtaposition and judge for yourselves : ' Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ ;' and ' He that heareth you heareth Me.' How does the word of Christ come to us ? ' He that heareth you heareth Me.'⁷ ' Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.' And the word of Christ is the voice of the living Church of God in every age, spreading from the sunrise to the sunset, speaking not only as a human and historical witness which has filled the world for eighteen centuries, but speaking as a supernatural and divine witness, because the Head of it is the Incarnate Truth Himself at the right hand of His Father ; and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, dwells in it and guides it, and speaks by it as the organ of His Voice.

Surely this principle of divine faith is perfect in its simplicity and universal in its application. It is what the poor Catholic child says every day of its life at its mother's knee or in the school. It is what Saint Thomas Aquinas said before his Crucifix while he wrote his twenty volumes of theology. It is like the breath of life—the same in all. If there were

⁷ S. Luke x. 16

anything further needed to prove the simplicity and universality of this principle of divine faith, it might be found in the philosophy of contrary facts. Set before your eyes two things : the Holy Catholic and Roman Church, one in faith, worship, and jurisdiction, perfectly united, not only in dogma of faith, but also in the principles and judgments which descend from faith, filling the whole world at this moment with a compact and solid unity, against which the world is storming in every language and conspiring in every place. And with what result? As the hammer welds the iron into a closer mass, so the indissoluble unity of the Catholic Church is, by persecution, tested, confirmed, and revealed. For eighteen centuries the mystical vine has stood, a living tree rising in its stature, spreading in its reach, unfolding its leaves, multiplying its fruits, showing its imperishable vitality in every branch and in every spray. This is on one side. Look on the other. Look at those who, three hundred years ago, rejected the principle of divine faith, and adopted in its stead the theories of criticism, of private judgment, of private interpretation. Look at Germany and Switzerland : look nearer home. What do we see at this day? The Christianity of these separated countries is like a tree that is dying. If the trunk

stands, the branches are bare; or if there be leaves, they are withered long ago. National religions are gradually drying up. The tree is returning to the dust, falling in upon its own roots. In a little while the place thereof shall know it no more. Because men refused to believe in the Divine Teacher, they have lost, first, the divine certainty of revelation; next, the fulness of truth; then the certain interpretation of Holy Scripture; and, lastly, the inspiration and canon of Scripture itself, together with the consciousness that faith is a grace infused into the soul, whereby we live in a supernatural order.

1. Two things only remain to be said. The first is, how precious and how vital is faith. We can please God only by faith, and 'without faith it is impossible to please God.'^s A creature who has received the gift of reason, if deprived of the light of faith, is stunted. Faith elevates the reason of man, illuminates, purifies, and perfects it. Reason is the highest gift in nature, the closest likeness of God Himself; and upon the gift of the light of reason comes the gift of the light of faith, elevating reason and giving to it new instincts, new faculties, new intuitions, whereby to see that which is invisible to sense, and to realise that which is to come. And more than

^s Heb. xi. 6.

this, faith appreciates the things of faith ; it knows them at their true worth ; it lays hold of them, and grasps them, so as to make them part of our own spiritual consciousness. The realities of the kingdom of God pass into our very nature ; they become the principles of our whole life, the motives of our action, the form of the soul, and therefore they unite all our powers with God. And for this reason faith is called a theological virtue ; because it unites the soul with its Maker, it gives man fellowship with Him. So Saint John writes : ‘ That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, . . . that our fellowship may be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ ; and this is the declaration which we have heard from Him and declare unto you : That God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness ; and if we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth ; but if we walk in the light, as He also is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.’⁹

2. The other truth is this : that faith, vital and precious as it is, may easily be lost. Being a gift of God, it may be justly forfeited and judicially withdrawn. Being a grace, it may be sinned away. It is with faith as with all other graces of the Spirit

⁹ 1 S John i. 3-7.

of God. You have in you the gift of charity ; but you may destroy it, if you have the will to be cruel or malicious. You have in you the gift of purity ; but you may destroy it, if you taint it by deed, or word, or thought. You have the gift of piety ; but you may sin it away, if by sins of the heart you drive the Holy Ghost from you. So it is with the gift of faith. The gift of faith must be cherished as you would cherish charity, purity, and piety. And there are two things which destroy faith. The one is infidelity, which destroys faith as its proper opposite, like as water puts out fire ; the other is immorality, which destroys faith by stupefying the soul. Infidelity means not only an intellectual denial of the truth ; it means also the practical insensibility and indolent refusal to correspond with the light of the Holy Ghost. If men wantonly expose this precious gift of faith to the attacks and to the subtilty of unbelievers, or to the pestilence and infection of infidel books, or to the poisonous literature which at this day is written against Christianity in every tongue, and above all against Christianity full and perfect, which is the Catholic faith, they have no one to thank but themselves. We in England are living and breathing in an atmosphere which carries with it, and wafts to and fro on every side, contradictions and subtilties

against the teaching of our Divine Master. And if to this, which is inevitable, you voluntarily add the invited temptations of either listening to those who contradict the revelation of Jesus Christ, or of studiously reading (which is a deliberate act, far more guilty before God) the falsehoods which are written against the truth which He has revealed, then you have no one to thank but yourself if you lose your faith, as you would have no one to thank but yourself if through running into danger you lost purity, or piety, or charity.

There is still another way in which faith may be lost, and that is by a contentious spirit. We see men on every side who are blinding themselves and are being darkened by a judicial blindness. There are terrible words in the Book of Psalms, '*Supercecidit in eos ignis et non viderunt solem*—The fire fell upon them, and they no longer saw the sun.'¹⁰ For the existence of God, which they deny, is as the sun in the heavens. And the existence of the Holy Catholic Church, which they deride, is as the light at noonday. The luminous universality of the Church is as the lightning, which shines from the east unto the west; and yet there are men who profess that they cannot see it. They deny that there was ever

¹⁰ Psalm lvii. 9.

a Church founded by Jesus Christ; they deny that He created us, or that God exists. How came they to this pass? Pride, indocility, and prejudice, the spirit of controversy, animosity, and perversity have fallen upon them. Their passions are heated and their wills are set on fire against the Church and the faith. In their contentions against the truth they have judicially blinded themselves. They have eyes and cannot see, ears and cannot hear, hearts and cannot understand. Their darkness is the forerunner of the outer darkness which awaits those who cannot, because they will not, believe.

But, as I said, there is also another agent which will destroy faith, and that is immorality. Nothing so deadens the heart, nothing so darkens the reason, as vice; and when, as I sometimes do, I hear men saying with an imperial air, 'I do not believe this—I do not believe that,' they remind me of the poor creatures we see at the corners of the streets labelled on their breast 'stone-blind.' There is, however, this difference: the poor sightless sufferers appeal to our pity and ask our help; the unbelievers glory in their self-inflicted blindness, and despise us who can see.

We have entered into a period when these warnings are in season. Hitherto mankind has believed that the gift of intelligence and the knowledge of

God through the light of reason are the true dignity of man. If to possess an intelligence whereby he knows the Infinite and Eternal God, perfect in His attributes of love and mercy, of justice and power, elevates man, then to lack this knowledge is no elevation. Surely if there be anything which ennobles man, it is to be lifted upwards and united with the Divine Original by Whom he was made. What, then, I ask you, is the state of those who abuse that very reason, which is God's best gift; who misuse the intelligence He gave for the knowledge of Himself to deny His existence; who say that the world is the only reality of which we have any positive knowledge; that the sensible facts and the phenomena of the world, and the things that we can handle and taste, and test and analyse by chemistry—that these things are the only truths we can know, and that anything beyond these—such as right and wrong, and conscience and soul—are superstitions of theology or abstractions of metaphysics? Does such a philosophy dignify or degrade human nature? What is the difference between a man and the dumb creatures? Is it not the possession and the right use of reason? If that be so, then, as I have said before and say again, such philosophy is the brutal philosophy. It reduces man to the level of those

who know not God. Nay, it teaches that we cannot know God. What more could be said of the brute natures? But that which degrades this philosophy more in my eyes is this, that it is not content with abdicating the powers of reason for its own disciples. They who profess it are not satisfied with their own state of privation. They go about to rob other men of their dignity. They will not let other men know God, or have the use of reason to know God. And there are none so tyrannical, none so bigoted, none so intolerant, as those who do not believe in the existence of God. They are so sure that the reason of man cannot know God, that they confidently affirm that God does not exist. He is the unknowable, because they do not know Him. And because they do not, we cannot. We have come at last to know that there is a fanaticism worse than that which they impute to us. These are truths very shameful and humbling to human nature. The men of the nineteenth century who profess to be the guides and lights of men, the creators and promoters of progress and modern civilisation, are beyond all men intolerant, despotic, and tyrannous. They have found out that the highest thing on earth is not the Church of God, but the State; that the State is supreme; that liberty of conscience is a fiction; that

obedience is due in all things and from all men to State laws, all revelation, all jurisdiction, all liberty, all rights of God and of His Church notwithstanding. This clumsy and incoherent philosophy is the negation of all faith : it is the deification of the human reason as the sole rule of life and of the human will as the sole source of law. Out of this philosophy of the Unreasonable there has come an elaborate system of politics, which has these two characteristics : first, a claim to interfere with the intellectual belief of other men ; and, secondly, a claim to control parental rights. They preach liberty of speech and of the press until it refutes them ; then they gag and suppress it. They will not let fathers and mothers educate their offspring in their own faith or in their own opinions. They banish all teachers who do not agree with them ; they claim to interfere with the training and formation even of the priesthood. Intoxicated by temporal greatness and military success, they think to achieve that which no power of man has ever yet accomplished—the subjugation of the Church of God. Like Titans, they are attempting to do the impossible, and God is bearing with them for a while to open the eyes of the nations. They began by deifying the State, declaring it to be omnipotent, not only over taxes and customs, and coinage and com-

merce, and sewage and drainage (in which things we willingly endure their omnipotence), but omnipotent over the human conscience, over the soul of man, over the Church of God. Here they go blind and cannot see the sun; and here we tell them that they are impotent. This portentous aberration of the reason springs from a despotic atheism, and this again springs from the disorder and tumult which three hundred years of separation from divine faith have inflicted on the world.

And now, dear brethren, I will bring all this to a practical use. There are at this moment, and in our country, attempts in hand to interfere with the Christian education of your children. Suffer no children of yours to go to any school whatsoever where they will be exposed to the remotest danger of losing their faith. Their faith is more vital than life itself. If you voluntarily expose them to the danger of losing it, you will be guilty of mortal sin. The consequence of such an act you know.

God is infinite in His mercy to those who have never heard the words or the Name of Jesus Christ. ‘How can they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? how can they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard?’¹¹ He sent of old a prophet to

¹¹ Rom. x. 14.

Nineve, and He spared the city, 'because there were more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who did not know how to distinguish between their right hand and their left, and many beasts.'¹² Therefore He spared Nineve. He will have mercy on all those who could not know His truth. He will have mercy even upon the heathen, for there shall come many from the east and the west, and shall sit down in the kingdom with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, when some of us shall be cast out. Our Lord had compassion on the multitude in the wilderness, 'because they had been with Him three days and had nothing to eat.' He pitied them lest they should faint by the way. Therefore He wrought a miracle to feed them. If He so cared for the body, how much more for the soul? Assuredly He will take care of the races and nations who, through no rejection of His truth, have never known His name. They will obtain in some way secret to us the benefit of His infinite mercy. But what shall be said of those who, having both reason and faith, have rejected the one and mutilated the other? What shall we say of the Christian world, which, having been born again of the Holy Ghost and illuminated by the light of faith,

¹² Jonas iv. 11.

has apostatised from God and His Christ? Hear what our Lord says to such : ‘ Wo to thee, Corozain ; wo to thee, Bethsaida. For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would long ago have done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.’¹³ ‘ Judgment will begin at the house of God.’¹⁴ It will begin with those who have been illuminated with the light of Christianity and through their own fault have lost it. Their judgment will be heavier sevenfold than the judgment of those who have never known the Name and the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, dear brethren, let us cherish the gift of faith. Cherish it by piety and prayer ; and these will inspire you with filial love to God, filial love to our Divine Master, filial obedience to His voice speaking through His Church. Prayer, by the constant daily union of intellect and heart and conscience and will with the Spirit of God, will elevate the convictions of your reason into the consciousness of faith. Cleave therefore to the material object of faith : the whole revelation of God. Rest upon the formal object of faith : the veracity of God, which

¹³ S. Matt. xi. 21, 22.

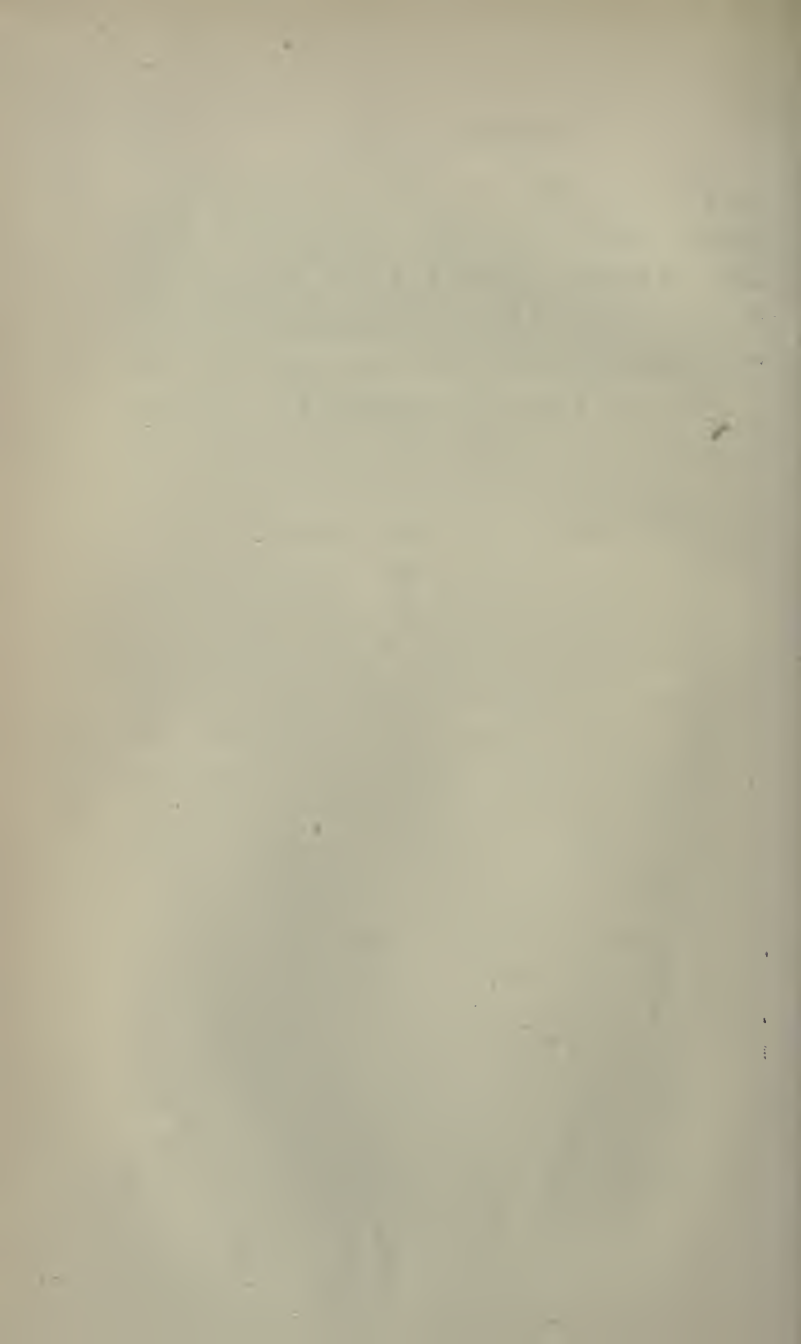
¹⁴ 1 Peter iv. 17.

speaks to us by the living and divine voice of the Church. The truths of divine faith are the revelation of mind of Jesus Christ. The truths which He uttered have become doctrines to us. The doctrines which He taught have, through conflict with the falsehoods of men, become what men call dogma. The commandments which He left for the guidance of our lives, for the illumination of our hearts, are the will of Jesus. The Church is His Presence dwelling among us. The sacraments are the works of His hands. As the multiplication of the bread in the wilderness and the cleansing of the lepers and the raising of the dead were miracles of mercy, so His sacraments now are miracles of grace. Love them, then, for His sake Who taught, ordained, and gave them; for He is the Son of God, our Lord and Master, our Brother, our Kinsman, our Friend. Love every jot and tittle, every ray and spark of His truth for His sake Who gave it. By these things He is testing our love to Him. ‘He that hath My words and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.’¹⁵ We see Him now by the light of faith: hereafter the light of faith will change into the light of glory. Faith comes from Him; it manifests Him to us; it leads us into the fulness of His light. ‘Now we

¹⁵ S. John xiv. 21.

know in part.' 'Now we see through a glass darkly; then we shall see face to face.' 'We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is,' and then 'we shall know even as we are known.'¹⁶

¹⁶ 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 S. John iii. 2.



IV.

THE VIRTUE OF HOPE.



THE VIRTUE OF HOPE.

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost.
ROMANS XV. 13.

As reason is a gift of God in the order of nature, so faith is a gift of God in the order of grace; and as the order of grace is higher and better than the order of nature, so faith is higher and better than any natural gift. Both reason and faith may be lost. But it were better far to lose even our natural life than to lose our supernatural faith. The Council of Trent, in its decree on faith, says that it is ‘*Radix et fundamentum omnis justificationis*’¹—the root and the foundation of the whole of our justification; that is, of our union with God, or our sanctification in this world, and of our salvation in the next. The Council of Trent, in these words, distinguishes the root from the foundation, because a

¹ Concil. Trid. sess. vi. cap. viii.

foundation contributes only support: it contributes no life to what rests on it; but a root is not only the foundation of the tree, it is also the productive principle from which it springs. It is as the acorn to the oak. It contains and produces the tree that springs from it. In like manner, faith produces hope and charity, from which our justification springs. Faith is therefore the root of our whole salvation.

Now in these words to the Romans Saint Paul says that God is the God of hope. Hope is so great a grace that he gives the name and title of Hope to God Himself, and that because He is the object of our hope. God is our hope, because He is our bliss. It is bliss that we hope for. Again, God is the giver of our hope, because hope also is a gift of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, God is the support of our hope, because it is by His love, and His strength, and His grace that the hope which He inspires into us is nourished and sustained. God is also the motive of our hope, because of His infinite love. Therefore he says, 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing'—for peace and joy are the fruits of hope, as hope is the fruit of faith—'that you may abound in hope,' that you may be filled and pervaded and penetrated with hope, 'and in the power of the Holy Ghost.'

Now hope is the second of the three theological virtues or powers infused into the soul. It is a virtue which bestows on us a confidence of attaining, by the grace of God, to future bliss, and of receiving from God all the helps that are necessary to attain that future bliss. The object of hope, then, is the goodness and grace of God.

We will look a little more closely, first of all, into what hope is; next, consider what are its fruits; and then what are the contraries or opposites of hope.

I. Hope, then, is a gift of the Holy Ghost which produces in the soul two things. The one is a desire after God, and the other is a trust in God. And hope itself is produced in this manner. The light of faith illuminates the whole reason, and thence the whole soul, with the knowledge of God, of His existence, of His perfections, of His glory, of His beauty, and of His sweetness. It reveals to the reason, and through the reason to the whole soul, that God created us for Himself, that He made us that we might know Him, love Him, serve Him, and worship Him in this world and in eternity, and that thereby we may become beatified or blessed in Him. Faith therefore illuminates us to know that God is the end for which we were made, and that if we live for anything below God or out of God we fail of the

end of our creation. And faith shows us not this only, but that God alone is the adequate end of the human soul; that money, wealth, pleasure, friendship, the whole world, is too small to fill the capacity of the soul; that the soul of man, made in the image of God, has a likeness of the immensity of God Himself, and that nothing is adequate to fill it—to fill his intellect, and his heart, and his mind—but God only Who made him; and that unless he corresponds with the original to the likeness of which he was made, he can never be satisfied. There will be a hunger and thirst which nothing can satiate or slake in time or in eternity. And as God is the only adequate end of man, He is the only end for which man can live without being degraded. If a man lives for this world, or for pleasure, or for money, or for honour, or for the science of this world, whatsoever end below God he live for, the soul in that proportion is lowered and debased. It is changed into the likeness of creatures, and thereby deprived of the likeness of the Creator. But the soul that is united with God, and lives for God, is elevated and conformed to the perfect original of which it is the image. And, further, God is the only end that can beatify or satisfy the soul with bliss. Everything below God is mutable, imperfect,

full of change and of vicissitude. God, and God alone, is immutable in His bliss, and He beatifies immutably all those who are united with Him. All other things, sweet as they may be, precious as we count them, happy as we may be in them for a time, all must change and pass away. God alone is changeless, because God alone is eternal; and if we live for any end that is not changeless and eternal, we shall be disappointed of our hope. When the soul is once illuminated with these truths, there springs up a hunger and a thirst to which neither the hunger nor the thirst of the body is for its intensity to be compared. The body hungers and thirsts for its natural food; the soul after God, Who is the breath of its life, its sole and only sustenance. Its desire becomes more and more intense as God is more and more known and appreciated. We hope, therefore, to attain our chief good, and we hope for all the means and helps whereby we may attain to the love, and the knowledge, and the worship, and the joy, and the peace of God hereafter. Both the end and the means, therefore, are the objects of hope.

The other motive of hope is a trust in God springing from experience. As we come to know Him, we come to appreciate His character. In the measure in which we know by experience that God

is charity, and sanctity, and pity, and goodness, and fidelity, we grow to trust Him with a personal confidence, as of heart with heart. Saint Augustine says that it is out of our own heart that we believe in the heart of a friend, for it is by faith that we love one another. It is not by looking on the countenance of a friend, for the countenance may beam upon us, and we may trust it, but the heart may be false and far off. That which we trust, and on which we rest our hope, is the heart which we have never seen. We know it only by a sort of intuition of faith, by which we penetrate beyond that which we do see. So it is with God. Though He is invisible, yet this hunger and thirst of the soul, illuminated by faith, reaches to the heart of God, and trusts in it. We rest upon the goodness and upon the love of God, not only as the great ruler of the universe, but upon His personal goodness to ourselves, one by one, as a friend and a father. And still more than this. From this trust in God springs up an experience of His goodness. Just as with a friend you may be thoroughly persuaded of his love for you before you have ever made trial of it by experience, nevertheless, as year after year goes on, you come to know by his unvarying conduct that what he says he is, and that what he does for you springs from his unchanging

love; from this you gain an experience of his character higher and surer than all intellectual conviction. It is this that Saint Paul means when he says, speaking of our Divine Lord, 'I know Whom I have believed.'² I know His character, His conduct, His heart; I have made trial of Him, 'and I am sure that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him,' that is, myself and my salvation, 'unto that day'³—the day of His coming. All our lives, then, we are making trial by experience of the goodness of God. You have known it from your childhood. You have known it by the manifold and multiplied indications of His love to you in every period of your life, by the care with which He has watched over you, by all the operations of grace whereby He has guided you, all the absolutions He has bestowed upon you, by the peace He has shed abroad in your heart, by the help He has given you in temptation, by the consolations that have come down upon you like showers in the time of your sorrow and desolation of heart. All this has taught you to know Him, and to say out of the depth of your own experience what the Psalmist said, 'I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living ;'⁴ and again when

² 2 Tim. i. 12.³ Ib.⁴ Ps. xxvi. 13.

he said, 'Taste and see that the Lord is sweet. Blessed is the man that hopeth in Him;'⁵ 'How great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee.'⁶ - Such, then, is the nature of hope.

II. Now what are its fruits? Just as faith bears hope and charity like two fruitful branches, so both hope and charity bear again a multitude of fruits. The first fruit of hope is an appreciation of God. You know that we are all bound, if we would enter into life eternal, to love God above all things. But that love of God does not mean the love of our emotions, or the sensible love which we feel towards human friends—it does not mean this, because this cannot be commanded. But the love of appreciation means the love of the reason, the conscience, and the will. We know by the light of faith, and we have made trial by the experience of hope, that God is good and sweet above all things, and that it were better for us to lay down our lives than to lose God. When Judas appraised our Lord at thirty pieces of silver, he was but an example of what all men do who do not love God above all things. They sell God for the world, for a little gold or for baubles. They are continually

⁵ Ps. xxxiii. 9.

⁶ Ib. xxx. 20.

showing that they set small price on the Eternal God. But those who learn by hope and by trust to know what God is, prize Him as they know Him and as they have found Him by experience, and therefore above all other things.

And, next, where there is this appreciation there is a great fear of losing God, a holy fear lest we should come short of our union with God in eternity. Just in proportion as we hope for the bliss of God, in that proportion also we have the fear of losing God, which, like a shadow following the substance, is inseparable. The more truly we prize anything, the more we fear to lose it; and the fear we have of losing anything may be taken as the measure of the price we set upon it. If we love a friend greatly, in that measure we fear to lose him. We may take that fear as the measure of the love we bear him. And therefore the holy fear of losing God springs up straightway from our appreciation of God: What is the pain of loss, which is a pain more keen than the pain of sense even in souls that are lost eternally, but the appreciation of God which comes too late, when salvation is lost for ever, and when union with God can no more be attained? From this holy fear springs humility; that is, the consciousness of what we are. It shows us our en-

tire dependence upon God. In ourselves we are nothing and can do nothing. Unless He sustain us we cannot stand, and unless we stand we can never persevere. We are as unstable as the perpetual shifting of the wind and the restless undulation of the water. We are never in one stay. Saint Paul says, 'I know that in me,' that is, in my flesh, 'there dwelleth no good thing, for that which I would I do not, and that I would not, that I do.'⁷ Then, from humility comes strength, which can spring from nothing but hope. We never attempt things that we know to be impossible. If we come face to face with a perpendicular cliff, no man who has not lost his reason would try to scale it; but if we come to the foot of a mountain, howsoever high and steep it may be, we know that we can scale it, if only we will to put out our strength and persevere. Our salvation is not barred by any cliff, because the Precious Blood of Jesus has made our way plain; but it is like the mountain which is both precipitous and steep. To scale it needs patient effort and strong perseverance. And where there is hope, which springs from the consciousness that all things are possible, there will come strength at all hours to accomplish our task. In warfare, men will fight as

⁷ Rom. vii. 18, 19.

long as there is hope of victory; in the instant in which they fail of hope their weapons drop from their hands; and even when in flight before the enemy, men have strength to fly as long as there is hope of escape, but, when the hope of escape is lost, they cast themselves upon the ground; and as a man swimming for life will strike out strongly so long as there is hope to reach the shore, but will cast up his arms and sink when that hope is gone,—so it is in working out our salvation. When Saint Paul says, ‘Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,’⁸ he adds also the motive of unfailing confidence and strength. The hope and the confidence that our salvation is possible is this, ‘for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do.’

III. Lastly, let us see what are the opposites of hope.

1. The first is presumption. As I have said, hope is a sure confidence founded on the goodness and grace of God. Presumption is a confidence founded upon ourselves. When we trust in anything out of and below God, it is a presumptuous confidence. When our Divine Lord was carried to the pinnacle of the temple, and was bid to cast Himself down to prove His Godhead, Satan tempted Him to an

⁸ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

act of presumption. He knew the will of His Heavenly Father, and He would not pass beyond the limits of that will. So is it with us. So long as we are in the ways of God we are safe, because so long we are strong. When we pass over the bounds of that way, both safety and strength depart from us. And the signs of this presumption are many. First of all, if men venture into the occasions of sin, whether it be moral or intellectual danger, it is clear they are trusting to themselves, for they know that the help of God will keep them so long only as they avoid temptation; but if they run into temptation, having no warrant to believe that the help of God will follow them, they are guilty of presumption. When men say, 'I can take care of myself; what matter where I go, or what I do, or what I read, or with whom I live?'—men that so speak and act are trusting in themselves, and are deliberately and formally putting from them the help of God. Men who say, 'I will repent one day, but not yet. I hope I shall be a better man before I die. I will go on for a while, but I always hope that the day of conversion and repentance will come to me'—such men are presumptuous. They have no warrant so to hope for salvation. And they also who neglect the means of salvation, prayer, and the holy sacra-

ments, with the other helps that are around us, have no warrant whatever to expect that God will work miracles of grace to save them. If they will not take the way which God has shown them, they can have no other hope to arrive at the end. Those who neglect the holy sacraments, who turn their backs upon confession and communion, and think that their salvation may be otherwise obtained, have no warrant whatever to expect that God will fulfil their confidence.

I will give another example, and it is an answer to a question often put to Catholics: 'Why do you ask the prayers of the saints? May you not pray to God yourself? May you not go straight to Him?' Certainly we may. But the man who says, 'I do not ask for the prayers of others, because I can confide in my own prayers,' is self-convicted of presumption. No, let us ask the prayers of all the friends of God upon earth, and of all the saints of God in heaven. They intercede for us. Let us pray for ourselves indeed day by day, and that earnestly; but the more prayers that are offered up for me, the more I thank God for it; and if all the prayers of the servants of God on earth and in heaven can be obtained by asking them, I will ask them till I die. They who despise these helps are neither humble nor have they

the grace of confidence in hope. Such, then, is the first opposite.

2. The other opposite of hope is despair, which grows into desperation. We have already seen that the direct antagonist which destroys faith is infidelity: because infidelity is the proper opposite of faith. Charity and the sanctifying grace of God is lost by any mortal sin whatsoever, whether it be of the flesh or the spirit. But faith and hope can only be lost by their own proper opposites; and as the proper opposite of faith is infidelity, so the proper opposite of hope is desperation. What, then, is desperation? I said before that hope and fear always go together, and that as the one rises the other falls. Now there are four kinds of fear. There is the holy filial fear of losing God, of which I have spoken before. This sanctifies the soul. It is called a filial fear of God, because it is the fear of sons. It was perfect in our Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But there is a fear which is called a servile fear, which is the fear of servants, and this, too, is compatible with the love of God and with salvation, because there is a just and legitimate fear of sons, and a just and legitimate fear of servants. But there is a third kind of fear, which is called the fear of slaves—a servile slavish fear of the terrors of hell,

a fear of the judgment without hatred of sin, without love of God, without hunger and thirst after Him as our bliss and as our eternal end. It is the fear of which Saint Augustine speaks, when he says that those who fear hell more than they fear sin show that they neither love God nor hate sin. And then, lastly, there is the fear of devils—the fear of those who believe and tremble—and that diabolical fear is the fear that generates despair. It is the fear that enters when hope is lost, a fear, accompanied by a sickness and a weariness of God, and this is akin to the seventh deadly sin, called Sloth. From this state of the heart and soul springs enmity against God. When the hope of seeing Him in eternity is lost, there comes a foretaste of the pain of loss, in which men turn against God with the enmity of despair. It is of such we read in the Apocalypse, where Saint John says that those on whom the wrath of God was poured gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven.⁹ These, then, are the two opposites of hope—presumption and despair.

Now let us turn back to the words of Saint Paul : ‘The God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing, that you may abound in hope and the power of the Holy Ghost.’ The light of Heaven

⁹ Apoc. xvi. 10.

and the waters that come down to moisten the earth are not more abundant than is the grace of God in the hearts of those who are ready to receive it. Open your hearts wide, and they shall be filled. Lift up the empty vessels, and they shall overflow with the presence of the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, dear brethren in Jesus Christ, let our first resolution be this: to hope for God's greatest gifts. Do not be deceived by the false humility of those who say, 'It is not for me to hope to be a saint.' You are all called to be saints; you are therefore bound to be saints. Now or hereafter, if you are saved, saints you must be. If you are to be perfect in eternity before the Throne, you must be saints in part and in some measure now on earth. Ask, then, for the greatest gifts of grace. Ask that your hearts may be dilated with the love of God; that so you may love God above all things, that you may love Him with your whole heart, your whole mind, and your whole soul, and your whole strength. Be contented with nothing less. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice.'¹⁰ It is His command. Can you seek for more than this? There is neither humility nor obedience in seeking less. The kingdom of God is God Himself. He is His

¹⁰ S. Matt. vi. 33.

kingdom, and if you have the kingdom of God you have God Himself. In the Lord's Prayer every day we say 'Hallowed be Thy name,' that is, may Thy name be sanctified throughout the whole world; 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' As the angels and saints do Thy will, so may we. May sinful, corrupt, rebellious men, as we are, be converted by Thy grace, and do Thy will on earth as saints and angels. They who have the mock humility of asking little things of God, Who is the giver of all great and perfect gifts, show a want of faith in the greatness of His generosity. He has already given His only-begotten Son, He has given the Holy Ghost. What greater gifts are there beyond these? Then let us ask for the greatest blessings. Let us ask for them in their perfect fulness. Let us ask for them because Jesus Christ has purchased them for us with His Precious Blood; and if He has paid the price of His Precious Blood to make them ours, will He refuse you when you ask Him for them? Ask for them because He has promised to give them. He has passed His word, He has pledged His fidelity. 'Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'¹¹ 'Whatsoever you shall

¹¹ S. Matt vii. 7.

ask in prayer believing, you shall receive.'¹² Ask the greatest gifts of God, because in asking them you honour Him. If a son should come to his father and should ask him some paltry trifling gift, the father would suspect that the heart of the son was mistrustful, and that he did not confide in his paternal love. If we treat friends in this niggardly and ungenerous manner, they resent at once the misconception that we show of their true character by the little things that we can trust them to do for us; but when we ask a friend to do great things for us, he takes it as a proof that we confide in the largeness of his heart. So it is with God. You will remember the servant who, being indolent, folded his talent in a napkin and buried his pound in the earth; and when his master came, what was his excuse? 'I knew that thou wert an austere man;'¹³ that is, he added insult to the wrong he had done—he had a mean, unworthy, ungenerous conception of his master's character. There was the real root of his sin. His lord would not have laid to heart the loss of the talent; but he deeply laid to heart this mean conception of his own generosity. Therefore we should hope for the noblest, highest, and largest gifts; hope to be saints; hope for every sort of good; hope that we may see God speedily after departing hence. You

¹² S. Matt. xxi. 22.¹³ S. Luke xix. 21.

know that Purgatory and expiation are before us all. Nevertheless, hope that that expiation may be speedy, and that your entrance into the vision of God may be hastened. And while you hope for the greatest things, avoid the least occasions of sin. The man that goes into the occasions of sin shows at once that he does not appreciate God. He puts a mean price upon God; he values God less than a fleeting pleasure or a worthless profit. It shows, too, that he has no hatred of sin; and a heart that does not hate sin is an unfilial and a servile heart. It is far on the way to be an evil heart. Men do not willingly go into the infection of plague, or fever, or pestilence; yet they go boldly into the occasions of sin. 'He that loves danger will perish in it.' The heart that does not hate sin is a heart that does not hunger and thirst after God. The love of God is not in it. It is an ungenerous heart. If the sins we have committed caused our Divine Redeemer His mental sorrows, His agony in the garden, His passion upon Calvary, and if, after all these, we are willing to venture into the occasions of sin, if we are not willing to choose His life of the Cross in preference to the fair and bright life of the world, our hearts must be unlike to His. He chose these things for us, and we make Him ill returns.

Besides this, learn to know the worst of yourselves. Do not paint your face and attire your heads when you go before God. Learn to know yourselves as you are in the sight of God. Learn to know that you are His creatures, and therefore that you are but a little dust. The breath of God, and the steadfast exercise of His benevolent will, keep you what you are. You are His creatures. Learn, then, your own unworthiness; your unprofitableness before Him. You are servants of God. The stars shine, for God made them to that end, and the trees drop their fruit, for to that they were created, and the seed that we sow in the field springs into its harvest. But man, created to the image of God, with a reason like the Eternal Son, and having in it the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, wastes his great gifts, and perishes. The barren fig-tree is our type. But there is a deeper lesson still. Learn to know what we are as sinners in the sight of our Redeemer and our Sanctifier. Remember, dear brethren, the mortal sins which perhaps stained and blotted your life in boyhood, manhood, middle life, and even in the drawing on of old age. You know what they are. Remember the crowd and the multitude of venial sins which every day are committed, so numerous, so subtil, so stealthy, that when you kneel down at night to examine your conscience you

cannot fix upon a tenth part of them. Remember the sins of omission you have committed all your life. How you have broken the first commandment, which commands you to have no other god but God alone; and yet you have made idols of the world, and of pleasures, and of vanities, and of friends, and of yourselves. You worship and serve yourselves more than God; and yet that commandment obliges you to know and to love God above all. What else shall I say? Take the sum of the graces that God has bestowed upon you on the one side, and the multitude of sins that you have committed against God on the other, multiply them together, and you will know your debt before God. And when you have come to know your state, so as to be perhaps almost tempted to despair, and to say that it must be impossible for you to be saved, cast yourselves with your whole weight upon the eternal and changeless goodness of God in Jesus Christ. When your sins are upon you as black clouds, or glaring as crimson, so that you are almost driven from your hope, cast yourself into the fountain of the most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. When your temptations, and your miseries, and the remnants of your past sins, and of your spiritual maladies, cling to you with the tenacity of a shadow, so that you are never at rest, cast yourself

into the furnace of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The fire of that Divine Heart will consume them as the dross. They will disappear before Him, and they will have no power to harm.

Hear the words of the Holy Ghost, and hope in Him: 'Casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.'¹⁴ 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not overflow. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, and the flames shall not burn in thee.'¹⁵ In the midst of all temptations, remember the words of our Divine Master when the Apostle thrice besought him to deliver him from the minister of Satan who buffeted him; the answer came, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is perfected in weakness.'¹⁶ Put, therefore, your trust in the Sacred Heart which was pierced for us, and say to our Divine Lord in your prayers every day, 'Thou wilt keep peace, because we have hoped in Thee.'¹⁷ Lord, I trust in Thee that Thou wilt keep me, that Thou wilt be round about me. 'Like the mountains round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people.'¹⁸ Thou wilt keep me in perfect peace—not only in peace, but in perfect peace—peace with

¹⁴ 1 S. Peter v. 7.¹⁵ Isaias xliii. 2.¹⁶ 2 Cor. xii. 9.¹⁷ Isaias xxvi. 3.¹⁸ Ps. cxxv. 2.

God, peace with men, peace with myself, peace in time, peace for eternity—perfect peace—in the peace that passeth all understanding.¹⁹ But our minds must be ‘stayed on Thee;’ that is, our whole intellect by the light of faith, and our whole heart by the grace of hope, must rest on Thee. Our mind is stayed on Thee, because it trusteth in Thee; it trusts because it loves, and it loves because it knows. We stay ourselves on Thee because we have had experience and trial of Thy love.

Therefore, ‘be careful for nothing, but in all things, in supplication and thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.’²⁰ Say to Him, ‘Lord, I have hoped in Thee, and I know that neither in life, nor in death, nor in eternity, shall I ever be confounded.’

¹⁹ Phil. iv. 7.

²⁰ Ib. iv. 6.

V.

THE VIRTUE OF CHARITY.



THE VIRTUE OF CHARITY.

Hope confoundeth not, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given unto us. ROMANS v. 5.

WE have already seen what is the confidence of hope, and how it is founded upon the knowledge of the goodness of God seen by the supernatural light of faith; and we have seen also that the supernatural light of faith causes to spring up in the heart a desire to obtain our chief good, which is our eternal bliss. We further saw how with the knowledge of that goodness there comes also a personal experience of it. As we trust in God, so He manifests His personal goodness to us.

Saint Paul then goes on to say that 'hope confoundeth not.' Now the word 'confound' signifies does not make ashamed, because it does not disappoint. Hope shall never be baffled of its expectation, shall never fail of obtaining its desires, because God

is faithful, and God will keep His promise. Saint Paul then goes on to give the reason. He says: 'Hope confoundeth not, because the charity of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost'—that is, the charity, or the love of God towards us, from which springs our love to Him again. But first it is the consciousness of the love of God to us that is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us: and then the virtue of charity.

Now our next subject in order is charity, the third of the three theological virtues which are given to us in our Baptism.

Hope, as I have said, springs from faith, and charity springs from faith and hope together. Now all charity is love; but all love is not charity. The word 'love' is very much wider than the word 'charity:' and there are many kinds of love.

First, there is the love of nature; the soul of man naturally desires that which is for its good and for its happiness. It is the natural hunger and thirst of the mind or the soul for that which is for its good. This is the lowest form of it.

Secondly, there is a supernatural love, which alone is properly called charity. Now the love of charity means the love of appreciation. The word *caritas*, or 'charity,' means the value or the price

we set upon anything. People, because they prize each other or appreciate each other, are dear to one another.

Thirdly, there is the love of predilection; that is, a love of selection or choice, when by affinity of character, or by any special reason, we are drawn towards some persons before others.

And lastly, there is the love of friendship. Now the love of friendship is the highest, the purest, and the most unselfish, and therefore the most perfect form of love.

These four kinds of love are in every one of us; if, that is, we be in the state of grace. There is in every one who is united with God the love of nature, which, as I have shown, is the love of hope, or the desire of God. The love of charity, too, is in all those who receive the Holy Ghost. So also is the love of predilection or of choice, with which we love God, Who has loved us from all eternity, and has chosen us for Himself. As He loves so we love Him again, choosing Him out of all things, and loving Him even better than life itself. And, finally, there is in all who are in grace the love of friendship, which is the special union of the soul with God by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This it is that constitutes the love and confidence of His

servants in this life. I am now going to speak only of this last, namely, the love of friendship; for that is the charity which is properly and specifically understood when we speak of being in the love of God and of our neighbour. The definition, then, of charity is this: it is the love of friendship, by which we will and desire for God all good things for His own sake, and because of His infinite perfections. Now every word of this definition has its force. The charity of which I speak is distinct from the love which springs from hope in this, that we there love God for our own sakes, and for the good that He bestows on us; but in this charity of friendship we love God for His own sake, and we desire all good and all glory to Him. It is an unselfish love; for just as perfect hope casts out fear, so perfect charity casts out self. In the proportion in which self is mixed with our charity, our love of God is not pure; it is so far selfish, it is mercenary, it partakes of the love of hirelings. But in the proportion in which charity is purified and self is cast out, our love for God is pure; and being pure, it wills and desires all glory and all good things for God, and for the sake of God. And what are those good things that we will to Him? We ask them every day in the Lord's Prayer: 'Our Father, Who art in hea-

ven, hallowed be Thy name.' The hallowing of the name of God is that He may be known, and worshipped, and loved, and served, and honoured by all His creatures. It is a desire that the grace of God be poured upon all—that an increase of glory may be given to God purely for His own sake. 'Thy kingdom come.' That is, may the manifestation of the glory of God, the accomplishment of His will—may all the good that man can do and creatures can accomplish—be done according to His will, and accomplished for His sake. 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' That is, as Thou art purely glorified in heaven, purely loved by all those that are about Thy Throne, so mayst Thou be loved and glorified upon earth. This is the love of friendship. We will now examine the words of the text, and we shall see precisely what it intends. Saint Paul says: 'The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.' Now the Holy Ghost is the third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity. We receive, then, as a gift the indwelling of the third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity. The Holy Ghost Himself comes to dwell in our hearts. You will read this all through the New Testament. If there be one thing more marvellous than another, it is that we Christians and Catholics, with the light

of faith in our hearts, and with the Holy Scriptures in our hands, go on sometimes half through our lives, some almost through the whole of life, speaking of the Father and of the Son, and are yet half-silent of the Holy Ghost. We read the New Testament, and especially the Epistles of Saint Paul to the Ephesians and the Epistle of Saint John, and we fail to see this : that the grace and the glory of Christians, as distinct from all others that have ever received the grace of God before or since the coming of our Lord, consists chiefly in this one thing, that we are made the temples of God, and that God the Holy Ghost dwells in us ; that the Holy Ghost has come to us as He never came before from the beginning of the world until the day of Pentecost. Where-soever He is, there is, too, the charity of God. These are two distinct things. There is a distinction to be made between the Person of the Holy Ghost and the charity which He gives, as there is between the sun and the light and the heat of the sun. The sun in the sky is always the fountain of light and heat. But the light and the heat are not always with us, for they may be intercepted by the clouds. Moreover, the light and the heat are emanations from the sun ; they are not the sun ; they do not constitute its being or its existence ; they flow from the fulness

and the power of light which radiates from the sun. So is it with God the Holy Ghost. He is the centre of light and love : but the light and love are not the Holy Ghost, they are the action of the Holy Ghost upon the soul ; and therefore there is a distinction to be drawn between the Uncreated Charity of God, Who is given to us, and the created charity of God, which is a grace infused into the soul. The Uncreated Charity of God is the Holy Ghost Himself. The Holy Ghost therefore personally dwells in the heart of those who are in the state of grace, and unites Himself to them. But the created charity of God is, as I have said, like the sun's light and heat. Wheresoever the sun is, there, by the action of its light and heat, it gives life and form, and perfection and fruitfulness, and maturity and ripeness to all things. These qualities and perfections are deposited, as it were, on the face of the earth ; they become the possession and the properties of the earth and of the trees and fruits throughout the world. So it is when the Holy Ghost is in the soul. The love of God and of our neighbour is like the ripeness and the fruitfulness which the sun bestows upon the works of creation. These are all infused into the soul, and are left abiding in the soul as qualities and properties and perfections belonging to it. It

is by that created grace that the soul loves God with all its mind and all its strength, and its neighbour as itself. Observe well the meaning of these last words. We are bound to love ourselves. Self-love, which is the curse of mankind, is the abuse and perversion of that love of self which is a divine law. Now what is that legitimate love of self? It is this: God made me, and I am a creature of God, and therefore I belong to Him. I am not my own; I have no rights over myself, except only those which God gives me. For instance, I have no right over my own life. I cannot take my own life without committing an act of high treason against God. A suicide is a self-murderer; he breaks the second great law of God. The first is to love God above all things; the next is that we love ourselves. The man who destroys his own life breaks the second great commandment of God. It is with amazement and, I must say, a kind of horror, that within the last week, within this Christian land of England, in this enlightened nineteenth century, I have seen cultivated men, men of intellect, men of high attainments, who have been defending in public the lawfulness of suicide. It is a rising again of one of the darkest forms of heathenism. As the thermometer, when you fix the register, marks what the degree of

cold has been in the night, so this one fact marks to me the state of apostasy into which some men in England have fallen. They have fallen from the revelation of Jesus Christ; ay I will go further, from the light of nature. As we have no rights over ourselves, and are bound to love ourselves with a rational love—that is, with the love of knowledge, the knowledge that God has made us; and according to the laws which He has imposed upon our nature, so we are also bound to love our neighbour as ourselves; that is to say, he also is a creature of God, he is the property and possession of God, just as I am, and I am bound to pay to him the same respect, the same love, and the same honour that I am bound to pay to myself. If I see that his soul can be saved by the loss of my temporal life, the law of charity prompts me to lose it. If I were to see that his temporal life could be saved by the exposure of my own, and even by the loss of my own, the law of charity bids me, if it does not bind me, to risk it. If the risk of my own life were necessary to procure him some great and signal good, charity would counsel me even to risk my life for it. But there is one thing that I may not risk, neither to gain any temporal good for myself nor to gain any temporal good for another—I may not risk my spiritual life and my

eternal salvation. The rational law of love for myself there comes in to limit my freedom. And though I may die for my neighbour to save his soul, or even his life—the life of the body—I may not risk my spiritual life or my salvation for anything whatsoever. This, then, is the nature of charity.

Here, therefore, we see the connection between charity and the sanctification of the soul. I must touch this very briefly, and then come to the practical application of what has been said.

You are well aware that the sanctification or holiness of the soul means the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, raising and conforming it to the perfection for which it was created. Charity, or love, is only one part of its perfection; but wheresoever the Holy Ghost is, He bestows another gift—sanctity as well as charity. These two come and go together; they flow from the same fountain, and run in the same channel. They are therefore inseparable. A man that is not holy does not love God or his neighbour; and a man that does not love God or his neighbour is not holy. Sanctity and charity cannot be put asunder. Moreover, charity is the greatest of all the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Saint Paul says: ‘There remaineth these three—faith, hope, and

charity. But the greater of these is charity.¹ And that because charity makes faith and hope perfect, and they are neither of them perfect without it. And, next, charity unites the soul with God. Neither faith nor hope does this. Again, charity is God Himself. Faith and hope are not God, but God is charity. Furthermore, charity is our eternal perfection and bliss; but there will be neither faith nor hope in eternity; for faith will have passed into vision, and hope will have passed into fruition. There will only remain for ever charity made perfect. And, again, Saint Paul says that charity is ‘the bond of perfection;’² that is to say, like as a golden thread sustains a string of pearls, and runs through them all, or as a clasp of gold holds a vestment together, so all the graces of the Holy Ghost, which constitute the sanctification of the soul, are sustained and completed and clasped together by charity. You remember in that same thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians how Saint Paul says, ‘Charity is patient, is kind, is not ambitious, is not puffed up; believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; rejoiceth not in evil, but rejoiceth in the truth.’³ This is his description of perfect charity; and charity is the crown, or I may say the circle, of glory

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 13.² Col. iii. 13.³ 1 Cor. xiii. 4-6.

which keeps all these things in their place. And thus, as I have said, charity is not only the perfection of sanctity in this world, but charity is the bliss of the soul in eternity, and that because without charity we could not see God, and without the vision of God we could not be blessed; and in eternity it is through charity that we shall see God. It is by the light of faith changed into the light of glory that the soul will receive the faculty or the eye whereby to see God. It will receive also the perfection of love or of the heart whereby to love God. It is the vision of God, and the union of the soul through charity with God, which will constitute its eternal bliss.

Let us, then, see what is its connection with our sanctification, and what is its connection with our future bliss. The Council of Florence has defined that the blessedness of the soul in eternity will be according to the measure of its merits in this world; and its merits in this world are in the measure of its charity. They that have loved much shall be the most glorified, and therefore the most blessed. They that have loved least shall be the least glorified and the least blessed. The measure of our charity will be the measure of our eternal bliss.

1. Learn, then, some practical truths from this.

The first is, that throughout our whole life our charity ought to be ever on the increase, and, if increased, so will be our bliss in eternity.

The charity which was infused into us in our Baptism, compared with the love of eternity, was as the smoking flax to the ardour of the sun. The fire was there, yet it was but the first rising of a flame; but that faint beginning may be enlarged, and fed, and nourished until it shall be like the flame of a seraph before the Throne. This lifelong increase of charity in the soul is wrought in two ways: first, by acquisition on our part; and next, by gift and infusion on God's part. The acquisition on our part is this: everything we do in the motive of charity brings an increase of charity. Not only the splendid alms, and the great labours, and the heroic sufferings of apostles and martyrs, but every little act of Christian love, so minute and so unseen that no one but our Heavenly Father, Who seeth in secret, is witness of it, brings a measured increase of love. Charity has the power of turning everything we do all day long, and in every moment of the day, to gold. If we have the motive of charity in our heart, our whole commonplace life will be laying up a weight of glory and an eternal multitude of sweetness and of bliss.

If you cannot do great things for God, at least you may have great desires. Desire His love and desire to grow in charity. The very desire will increase the love that is in you. Every exercise of it and every the least action will make it to grow more. Like as the use of the arm develops its muscle and its power, so with charity. And, once more, even the habitual state of the heart will gain grace for you. As you walk in the streets you see the men of this world hurrying to and fro with countenances lowering, and lined, and marked, I may say scarred, with anxiety, and the worldliness of their minds. You may see men who, from ambition, or from jealousy, or from many passions, have countenances which are furrowed deep by care. On the other hand, you will see some whose countenances are always bright, calm, and kindly. What makes the difference? The men I first described are living for this world. They are harsh, churlish, disappointed, and confounded. Their hopes betray them. Their confidence comes to naught and their labour is turned to bitterness. What they are within they are without. Countenance is transparent, and the soul shines through. And they who are calm and bright have a gentle expression: why is it so? Because things that are bright, and calm, and sweet, and beautiful, God and

His goodness and the world to come, the hopes which bear them up, the trust which they know can never fail—these diffuse over their whole mind and heart the brightness and sweetness of the realities which are ever before their sight. Even in the pelting of the stones Stephen's face shone, for heaven was open to him. If any man will live in the love of God, the love that is in him will be multiplied. I will give you a practical test to try yourselves. What are your first dispositions towards everybody around you? What are your first thoughts about them? Are they gentle and kindly, or censorious and critical? Is it an effort to you to be charitable, or is it an effort to you to be severe? If the habitual countenance, so to say, of your heart is charitable, and thoughts of severity are acts of second thought constrained by necessity, not prompted by your habitual state, then you are living in the love of God and your neighbour. But if your habitual state, and what I will call the countenance of your heart, is contracted, and clouded, and churlish, if it is an effort to you, if it needs deliberation, so that you must put a force upon yourself before you can act or speak charitably to others, then your habitual state can hardly be one of the love of God and of your neighbour.

If you live in mutual kindness with all about you, the love of God will be abundantly poured into your hearts; it will be given to you as a reward, and as an increase of grace for your fidelity. ‘To him that hath shall be given.’ All such shall have a special blessing in their Communions. They put their lips to the source; they draw charity from the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and from His Sacred Heart, the very fountain of charity. To them it will be always open. They are the disciples of the Sacred Heart; and where the Sacred Heart of Jesus is, there is all grace.

2. But as your charity may be increased all through your life, so your charity may be lost in one moment of time. And it may be lost in two ways. Any act of mortal sin, of any kind whatsoever, at once breaks friendship with God; and when the friendship of God is broken the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost departs. So also any mortal sins against charity, any specific sins against the specific grace of charity, will destroy it. For instance, an unjust action whereby you wrong a neighbour—if it be done with deliberation or malice—destroys the love of your neighbour, and therefore the love of God, for they come and go together. Again, to bear false witness against your neighbour, or wilfully to strike a murderous

blow at his reputation, destroys the love you owe to him, and with it the love of God. In like manner detraction, though it may not amount to bearing false witness, but the fretting, nibbling, gnawing, pertinacious filing away of the fair name of your neighbour,—this too destroys, little by little, the charity of God. And more, it is not only the committing detraction ourselves, but the permitting others to commit it—that thirsty pricking of the ear which is curious to listen, and so tempts another to speak evil. To listen to detraction is as much an act of detraction as to speak it.

And therefore, if in any of these ways we wilfully sin against charity, we shall certainly lose it. Hear the words of the Holy Ghost: ‘We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. If any man loves not his brother, he is a murderer; and you know that no murderer hath eternal life. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for if he love not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God Whom he hath not seen?’⁴

3. And, further, let us bear in mind that, charity once lost, it is beyond the power of the human will

⁴ 1 S. John iii. 14, 15; iv. 20.

to regain it. No will of man can restore that which the will of God alone at first bestowed. They who have lost the love of God are dead before God. They abide in spiritual death, and there is no voice that can call them out of that spiritual death but the voice of the Son of God. Until the voice which called Lazarus from the grave shall say, 'I absolve thee from all thy sins,' the love of God and the life of the soul is not in them. And while the soul is dead, all its works are dead. They are like the fruits that tradition says grew upon the trees about the cities of the plain and on the shores of the Dead Sea—fair to the eye without, but full of ashes. Such are the actions of a man who is out of the love of God and of his neighbour. The charity of God is a gift of God not due to nature, a free sovereign grace bestowed through the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. It was not due even to His creatures in a state of innocence—it was a royal gift superadded to their natural perfection. How much less is it due to sinners who, having received it, have again lost it by their wilful sin. Compare the Christian world with the heathen world around you. The heathen world is dead because the love of God is not in it. What was it that raised the Christian world from that state of death? The charity of God, which

was poured out upon it by the Holy Ghost. At this moment the heathen world is dead before God; and multitudes within the visible Church of God are twice dead. The face of Christendom is like the vision of the Prophet Ezekiel. The valley is covered with the bones of the dead; a multitude beyond all count: and behold 'they are dry,' 'very dry,' utterly dead, and so dead that no voice of man, no will of man, could give them life. Even the voice of the prophet had no power until the spirit of life from the four winds—that is, from heaven and from the God of heaven—came and breathed upon the slain; not till then did they stand upon their feet and live. God only, Who at the first gave life, can give it back again; and He has ordained a special sacrament whereby we may be restored to charity. And until we have heard the words of absolution, and have received from the Holy Ghost into our hearts once more the infusion of sanctifying grace, with which charity is inseparably linked—until our Heavenly Father has fallen upon the neck of the prodigal, and has once more given us the kiss of peace—no soul which has lost charity can be restored to the friendship of God. There are some men who, having turned their back upon Him, will not return. They live obstinately on the northern side of the mountain, where there is perpetual rime

and mist, frost and snow, cold winds and sunless skies. They wilfully keep out of the light and love of God, and that because they are conscious of unrepented sins or of sins they will not forsake. 'This is the judgment: because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, for their works were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.'⁵ 'God is light, and in Him there is no darkness.' 'If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as He also is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'⁶

Learn, then, to know the love of God in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is the Book of Life; open to all; easily to be read. Take that Book of Life and read it, every page. It is written within and without with the pledges and the promises of God's personal love for you. They only in the sight of God are great who have a great charity. Kings, emperors, princes, statesmen, orators, men of science, are but as the dust of the earth compared with the soul that is filled with the love of God. What made

⁵ S. John iii. 19, 20.

⁶ 1 S. John i. 5-7.

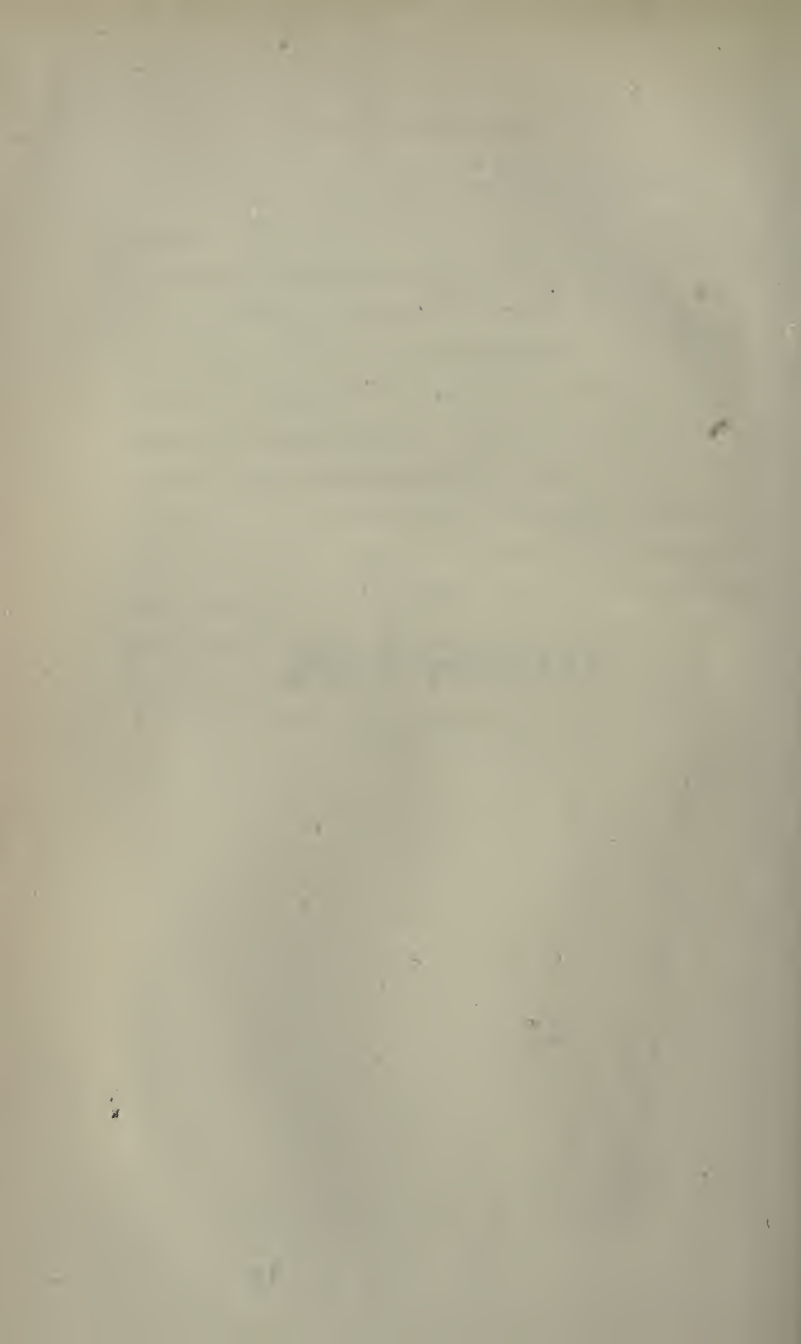
the Apostles, and the Evangelists, and the Martyrs, and the followers of Jesus Christ to be kings, and priests, and princes in the Kingdom of God? The love of God and their neighbour. And what is the Kingdom of God upon earth? The reign of love, the charity of God to man and of man to his fellow. The Holy Catholic Church, the mystical Body of Jesus Christ, is called by the name of charity. It is the uncreated charity of God visibly incorporated. You say it in your baptismal creed: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, in the Holy Catholic Church.' 'There is one body and one spirit.' It is one, because where there is charity there are no divisions. It is He Who made men to be of one mind in one house, when it was shaken by the mighty wind coming and illuminated by the tongues of fire. There is a divine unanimity throughout the Universal Church binding it together, because the love of God is its light. The world, with its multitudinous contentions, wars against the charity of God. But no blow struck at it can destroy its life. Saint Hilary says of the Passion of our Divine Master, that they wounded His humanity, but the Godhead they could not reach. The blows that were struck at Him passed harmless through His Godhead, as a sword passes through a flame. No weapon can cut it asun-

der. So is the Church of God imperishable. So all they who have the love of God in them shall never perish. The gates of hell cannot prevail against them. Saint Paul says: 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ that died, yea, rather Who is risen again, Who is at the right hand of God. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor depth, nor height, nor any other creature, shall separate us from the love of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord.'

⁷ Rom. viii. 33-39.

VI.

THE GLORY OF SONS.



THE GLORY OF SONS.

Those whom He foreknew, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. And whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified. ROMANS viii. 29, 30.

THESE words, when read in the light of the Holy Catholic Faith, are as clear as the noonday; but out of the unity of the Church they have been for ages the centre of a perpetual conflict. They set before us the steps by which God brings us to justification.

From all eternity there was present to the Divine intelligence a perfect foreknowledge both of the first creation and of the second in all their fulness. God foreknew all men, one by one, for He knows all whom He has made; but the foreknowledge here spoken of is not this, but a special foreknowledge of grace. God has a purpose and work of election through the Incarnation of His Son. Though all men are redeemed

by His Precious Blood, all are not called to the light of faith. But those whom His intelligence foreknew, His will decreed to be conformed to the image of His Son, that is to the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ our Lord, that He might be the firstborn of many brethren. The first Adam is the father of the whole race of mankind born in sin and death. The Second Adam is the divine original and the elder Brother of the whole race of mankind born again through grace unto eternal life. And those whom God had so predestinated to grace He has also called—that is, in due time, by the voice of His Spirit, He called them to the knowledge of faith in Jesus Christ ; and those whom He called He also justified—that is, He sanctified by His Spirit dwelling in them, whereby they are made just before Him. And those whom He justified He also glorified. Now the word ‘glorified’ does, indeed, also signify to be beatified in heaven ; but that is not the special meaning of the word in this place. Its special meaning is, that upon those whom He justified He laid the glory of the adoption to be the sons of God. He bestowed upon them the glory of being the brethren of His Incarnate Son. They, being adopted through grace to be His sons, have therefore already, as Saint Peter says, in this world the spirit of glory and of God resting upon them.

There is, then, a glory upon the head of every true Christian, of every living member of Jesus Christ. Even now the first rays of this eternal light are around us. This, then, is the plain meaning of Saint Paul's words in the text.¹

Now we have already examined the nature and office of the three theological virtues; that is, of faith, which, as I said, the Council of Trent has declared to be the foundation and the root of our whole justification; secondly, of hope, which springs from faith, and is matured into confidence; and, thirdly, of charity, or the love of God and of our neighbour, which springs from faith and hope. Now all those who are in charity are justified. Saint John says: 'God is charity; and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him;' ² that is, the just soul and God mutually dwell and abide in each other. If these were not the words of the Holy Ghost, no man would dare to speak them. God dwells in the soul, and because of His indwelling the soul also dwells in God. The soul is encompassed and penetrated by the perfections of God—by His holi-

¹ 'He glorified by gifts of grace and the adoption.' S. Chrysostom in Rom. Hom. xv. tom. ix. p. 595, ed. Ben. Paris, 1731.
 'That they might be glorified by the endowment of graces.' S. Jerome in Rom. viii. 30, tom. v. p. 953, ed. Ben. Paris, 1706.

² 1 S. John vi. 16.

ness, justice, mercy, charity, by the light of truth, which is a radiance descending from the Divine Wisdom, and by sanctifying grace, which is infused by the Holy Ghost. The soul, then, is enveloped and encompassed in God. Every soul that is in charity, and lives in the love of God, is justified. How can it not be justified if it abide in God, and God in it? And if so, then it is already glorified, for where God is there is His glory.

But this text, as I said, has been the subject of endless controversy. Though I need not dwell upon it, I may at least in outline show what that controversy has been. Now there are two worlds: there is the world of truth and of reality, and there is the world of shadows. The world of truth and reality is the world of faith and grace into which God has called us. The world of shadows is that world of words, figures, metaphors, and abstractions into which the master-builders of error, three hundred years ago, led astray a multitude of the Christian people. I will therefore, first, speak in passing of these errors or shadows of truth; then I will state what the perfect truth of the faith is. I need not dwell upon the shadows, for in the light of truth all shadows disappear.

There are five great errors which were introduced

into the subject of justification some three hundred years ago, and they have continued, and have spread through the minds of Christians, distorting and perverting the whole doctrine of our salvation. The first is this—that by the fall and by original sin the nature of man is essentially changed. It is not changed in its essence. Secondly, that by original sin the free-will of man is destroyed. Our freedom is not destroyed. Thirdly, that we are justified by the imputation of the righteousness or justice of Jesus Christ. We are not justified by the imputation, but by the communication and infusion of justice, whereby we are made just. Fourthly, that the disorder and turbulence and ignorance which are in the soul, as the consequence of the fall, are sin before God. These things in the regenerate are not sin before God. They may be the cause of sin and the matter of sin in those who wilfully make them so. The whole nature of sin is taken away in our regeneration, and we are justified, though the three wounds still remain in us. Lastly, it has been taught that the faith which justifies us contains in itself a certainty of eternal life—not only that certainty of hope of which I shall speak hereafter, but a certainty of faith which can never be lost, and of itself constitutes our salvation. Now here are five errors which, as I said before, I will

not mention again; for when the Catholic doctrine of justification is stated the shadows vanish away.

What, then, is our justification? It is the infusion and indwelling of justice, whereby the soul is translated from the state of death to the state of life. It is the translation of the sons of Adam to the adoption of the sons of God; or, once more, it is the restoration of the due order between God and man, whereby the intelligence and the will are subjected to God as our last and supreme end for which we were created, and from which, by the fall, we were turned aside.

1. Now, in order to make this more clear, I will first of all show what was the state of original justice, because our justification is our restoration, under a certain reserve and with certain limitations, to that state of original grace from which man by disobedience fell. What, then, is the state of original justice? The Council of Trent, after having weighed long whether to say that man was *created* in grace, finally determined to say that man was *constituted* in grace, and for this reason: if man had been created in grace, it might have been possible for some one to conceive that grace was an essential part of human nature, because it was said to be a part of our creation. It is not a part of human nature, nor is it a part of our creation. It is something superadded to it, as

we shall presently see. And therefore, in saying that man was constituted in grace, the Council of Trent expressly, and with the greatest precision, declares that man was placed in a state or condition higher than his own nature. Now man, in the state of original justice, had three perfections. He had a natural perfection; that is, his humanity was perfect in all that constitutes its nature, the soul and the body. The body was perfect in all that constitutes its symmetry and its life; the soul was perfect in its three powers of intelligence, and will, and affection. I do not now dwell upon this, nor will I attempt to say how the intelligence of Adam in the beginning was illuminated, or what truths he knew. It is reasonable to believe that he had an anticipation of many of those supernatural truths which are known to us by faith, that his will was in itself perfect as to the power of originating his own actions, and that, as we shall see hereafter, it was elevated and assisted by the grace of God. His passions and affections were in a state of subordination and tranquillity by the control of his reason and his will. Such was the first and natural perfection of the soul and the body. To this was superadded a second perfection, which is supernatural, the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is no part of human nature—no part of creation—for the Holy

Ghost is the uncreated charity of God. Adam, in the beginning, had the gift of the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, and because he had the gift of the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, therefore he was just. The fruit of his justice was sanctity, illumination, and union with God. He was also the son of God. This is the supernatural perfection. But, thirdly, there is a preternatural perfection, which arises from the union of the natural with the supernatural; that is to say, the immortality of the body, and immunity of the soul from the rebellion of the passions. Now the body was free from all disease, and the soul was free from all sorrow, because free from all sin. In original justice, no sorrow, no affliction of any kind, had part in the soul of man. These three perfections constitute original justice.

Original sin consists in the loss of that state; and the definition of sin is simply that it is the privation of grace. Just as blindness is the privation of sight, and darkness is the privation of light, and death is the privation of life, so sin is the privation of grace; and human nature without grace is in the state of sin, which is a state of privation. We are born in original sin, because we are born deprived of grace. If we were born blind and deaf, we should be born into the privation of sight and speech.

So they who are born without the Holy Ghost are deprived of spiritual life, because they are without the spiritual grace which is the life of the soul.

Now from this you may see that the doctrines which tell you that original sin is an infection, or taint, or corruption of our nature, simply mean this, that when the grace of the Holy Ghost is lost, the soul falls into a darkness which is ignorance, into a weakness which comes from that darkness, and therefore into disorder; the intelligence is darkened, the will is weakened, and the heart is turbulent, by reason of our losing the grace and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, by Whom the soul was prevented, sustained, and sanctified.

Our justification, then, is a restoration to that supernatural state of grace in which man was constituted in the beginning; and I say to a supernatural state of grace, because we are not yet restored to the natural and preternatural perfections above described. We are still subject to ignorance, weakness, disorder: we are not immortal in the body, nor in perfect subordination to grace in the soul. Nevertheless, by the sanctifying presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us we were made the sons of God, and they who are made the sons of God are justified. We therefore are put back again into the state of grace from which

Adam fell, but neither the natural nor the preternatural perfections are restored. There is still death of the body, and diseases which are the forerunners of death. There is still sorrow in the mind, for sorrow came with sin into the world. More than this, there is ignorance in the intelligence, weakness in the will, turbulence in the affections; and these affections become passions, and the word 'passion,' which simply signifies a state of suffering, has become an evil word, because the turbulence and the disorder of the human soul are evil.

2. You will see, then, that we are justified, not by the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but by the imparting, and infusion, and indwelling of the gift of justice by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Our justification is not a shadow, but a reality; and those who teach the doctrine of justification by imputation have simply confounded the language of Christian men. There are three words which are sacred in the Theology of the Church—absolution, sanctification, justification. No man is justified but he who is at the same time absolved and sanctified; for when God absolves He infuses sanctifying grace.

Such, then, is the gift of justification. It is the Holy Ghost dwelling in the soul, and restoring us to sonship and to friendship with God. The Council

of Trent says, that in those that are born again 'there is nothing that God hates.'³ Understand the meaning of these words. We are all conscious of the effects of the fall. We have ignorance in our understanding, we have all manner of rebellions in our will, and we have also turbulence in our passions. We have an inward conflict and an inward warfare, which Saint Paul describes in the very chapter before that from which I have taken the text: 'In me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but to accomplish that which is good I find not. For the good which I will I do not; but the evil which I will not that I do. . . . Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'⁴ We have upon us the effects of the fall and the penalties of sin. They are the occasions of sin, and the fuel of temptation. It is they that are for ever raising against us a constant warfare. Nevertheless, they that are most sorely tempted are not sinful before God unless they consent to it. They who resist temptation, though they walk in the midst of a fire, are not guilty so long as they do not yield. It is only by consenting to a temptation that temptation becomes sin, and

³ 'In renatis enim nihil odit Deus.' Concil. Trid. Sess. v. De Pecc. Orig. 5.

⁴ Rom. vii. 18, 19, 24.

our personal act. God sees no sin except in a will which consents to evil. And in those who are justified this warfare is not sin. It is the occasion of greater grace, and of manifold acts of fidelity, and of the love of God, and of perseverance, and is a pledge of a greater reward hereafter. If at any time those that are justified do, for a while or in any way, consent to evil, it is immediately followed by contrition, and the sorrow of contrition blots out and puts away the partial, transient, and momentary acts in which they wavered against the will of God. They abide still in the state of justification, of friendship, and of peace with God. God is their Father and their friend; and persevering in that grace, they will be surely saved. Even in this life they are in a state of salvation; and if they shall persevere by fidelity on their part, they will surely receive the gift of perseverance, which God on His part always bestows on all who are faithful to Him. Such, then, is the doctrine of our justification.

I will end with a few practical words.

1. First of all, it is certain, with the certainty of faith, that all baptised infants have been justified. It is as certain that we were justified as that we were born into the world, and that for this reason. We all as infants were born again in Baptism; unless, in-

deed, I speak to some who, through the negligence of parents, may have been defrauded of their Christian inheritance. You have all, then, been baptised, and, if so, you have all been born again, you have received the gift of the Holy Ghost; and when you were regenerated you were justified, you were placed again in a state of justice before God. Every one of you has received the gift of sanctifying grace; you have been made children of God and heirs of His Kingdom. This is as certain as the earth under our feet. But I do not say, nor can I say, it is certain with the certainty of faith that you are justified now, for that depends upon your fidelity to grace, of which I cannot be certain. If you have persevered in that state of justification, you have in your Baptism every one of you been ‘washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.’⁵ And if you have again fallen, then in the Sacrament of Penance the Precious Blood has come down on you once more, and has washed away every sin committed since your regeneration. You have been once more restored to a state of justification: unless, indeed, you have put a bar in the way of grace—and there is no bar that can hinder it except mortal sin. You have, moreover, eaten and

⁵ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

drunk the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is not more certain that you have eaten the food of the body that perishes, than that at the altar you have received the Flesh and Blood of the Son of God from His own hands. How is it possible, then, that you should not be justified, or that you should be unconscious of the great dignity of the state in which you are? How is it possible that we can be conscious of our name and state in this worldly life, and of all things that are about us, and yet that we should be unconscious of our state of grace before God; that we should be conscious of having hands and feet, and eyes and ears, and should live in all the activity of our natural life, and yet be as unconscious as if we were in a swoon or a sleep—many of us, if not most—of our supernatural life, with all its faculties, instincts, intuitions, and of the presence of the Holy Ghost Who dwells in us? We are unconscious of the circulation of our blood; we are unconscious of the indwelling of the soul in the body; but this is only a faint sample of our unconsciousness of the perpetual operations of grace which flow from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our soul.

2. It is certain, then, with the certainty of faith—for God has revealed it to us—that Baptism gives regeneration, that the Sacrament of Penance gives

absolution, and that the Sacrament of the Altar gives the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. These are revealed truths, certain with the certainty of faith. It is certain that we were justified in Baptism, because as infants we put no bar to grace. But I said we are not certain with the certainty of faith that we are in a state of justification now. The Holy Scripture says that 'there are wise men and there are just men; and their works are in the hands of the Lord, and no man knoweth whether he be worthy of love or hatred.'⁵ We know so little of the holiness of God, and we know so little of our own sinfulness, we are such partial judges of our state, that many a man pronounces an absolution on himself when, in the sight of God, he is spotted with sins from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. How, then, can we be certain that we are in a state of justification at this time? Not by the certainty of faith, but by the certainty of hope, for we have no revelation of it. But we have the certainty of hope, the certainty of confidence, which springs from hope, from the knowledge of the character of God, and from the experience of His love to us. From that hope and confidence we may judge of our own state; whether or no we are still in the grace of justification. If, then, you can say to yourself, 'I am

⁵ Ecclesiastes ix. 1.

not conscious of any thought, or word, or deed in my life wilfully indulged against the law of God,' then you may have this hope. But Saint Paul has said: 'I know nothing against myself; yet I am not thereby justified'—he mistrusted his knowledge of himself—'but He that justifieth me is the Lord.'⁶ His only hope was in the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. If you are conscious, then, that you are striving to enter in at the strait gate, that you are not looking back, but, like the Apostle, you are saying: 'Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect But one thing I do; forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth to these that are before, I press on to the mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus:'⁷ if you are conscious that you are doing your utmost, and that you would rather lay down your life than knowingly and wilfully break the law of God, then, trusting in God, you may take the consolation of hope; you may believe with a confidence founded upon this knowledge of yourself, and much more of your experience of the character and the love of God, that you are still forgiven in His sight. And, in order to assure ourselves of this, let us take care to keep our hearts in union with God.

⁶ 1 Cor. iv. 4.⁷ Phil. iii. 12-14.

3. The bond of our union with God is the love of God above all things. He that dwelleth in charity dwelleth in God, and God in him. Here is the link of gold which binds the soul to God. Keep that link fast, and do not be afraid when the consciousness of your past sins and of your many temptations seems to come down upon you and to overwhelm you as a flood. In those darkest times, be sure that if you love God you are still united with Him. It is not when we walk in the brightness of the noonday only that we are united with Him. The purest union with God is when we walk with Him in the darkness, without consolation and without joy; having no other guide; our hand in His hand; going on like children, not knowing whither; but obeying the inspirations of God to do or not to do as He wills: out in the bleak cold sky, with no joy in our prayers and no rest of heart, in constant inward fears, with temptations all around, but always faithful to the guidance of the Spirit of God. 'Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.'⁸ There are two axioms in the Kingdom of God which shall never fail: no penitent soul can perish, and no soul that loves God can be lost.

⁸ Rom. viii. 14.

Lastly, therefore, let us make sure of our love to God; and how are we to do so? By love to our neighbour. ‘If any man shall say, I love God, and hateth his neighbour, he is a liar; for if he love not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God Whom he seeth not?’⁹ Again, the Holy Ghost says by the Apostle: ‘We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren.’¹⁰ It is the sign and seal of God, attesting His divine work in our translation from the state of death to the state of life, from the state of the sons of Cain, who hate their brethren, to the state of the sons of God, who love their neighbour. Let us, then, love our neighbour in all the kinds and works of charity, even in the least unnoticed actions; and not only in actions, but in our words—in words of kindness, of gentleness, of good will; and not only in our words, but in our thoughts, not harbouring in our hearts anything that is not loving, compassionate, and tender towards other men—even to the unworthy, even to the fallen, even to the repulsive and the ungrateful. Bear the same hearts towards your neighbour which you desire your neighbour to bear towards you. Keep all your severities for yourselves. No man loves his neighbour aright who is not severe to him-

⁹ 1 S. John iv. 20.

¹⁰ Ib. iii. 14.

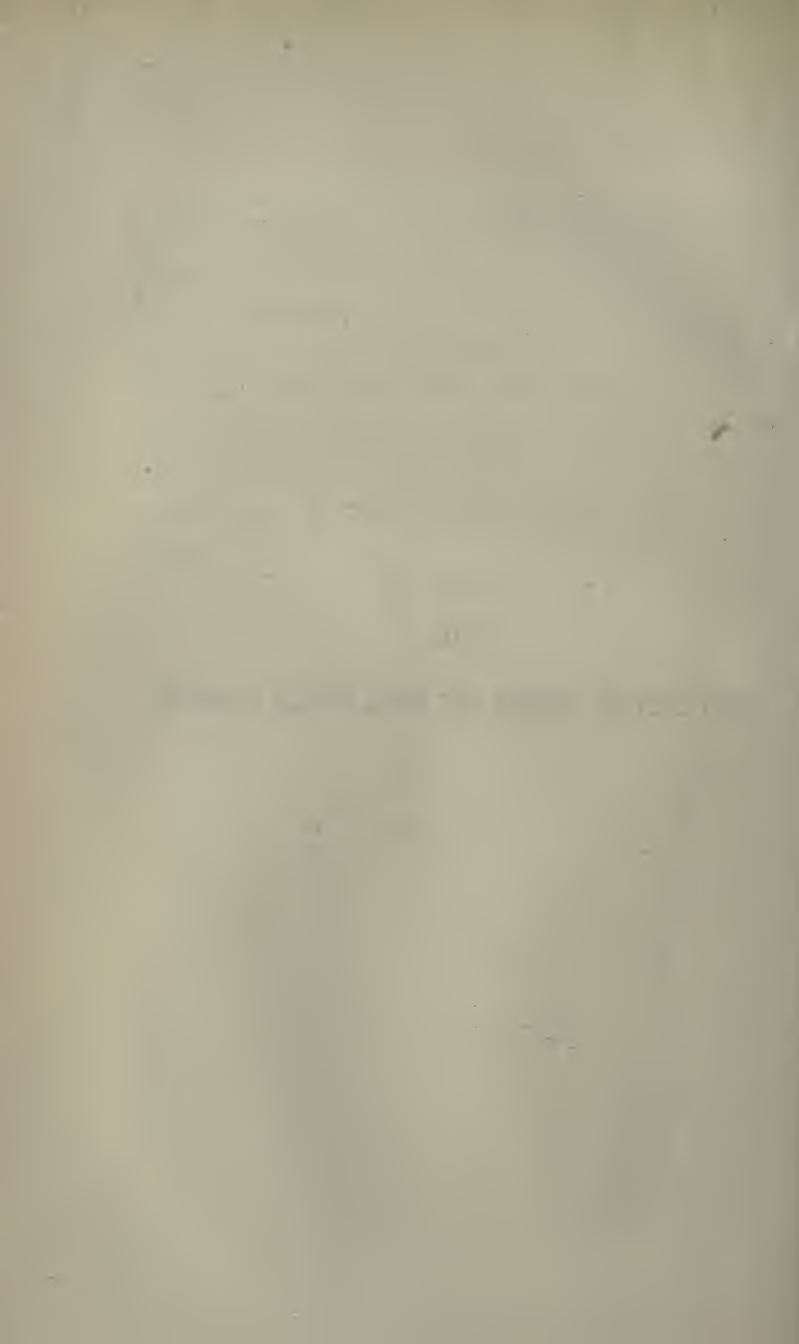
self. The man who looks lightly on his own faults, and with facility absolves himself, is a scribe and a pharisee. He will hardly escape the fault of judging the conduct of his neighbour with severity. The more severe we are to our own faults, the more gentle and equitable we shall be to the faults of others; the more indulgent we are to ourselves, the sharper and the less just we shall be to other men. Therefore, dear brethren, be conscious of your own dignity and be conscious of the dignity of others. You are the sons of the Great King, and your neighbours are likewise the Great King's sons. Honour one another; live in charity. Let your life be as heirs together of the Kingdom of God. From all eternity God foreknew you, and in due time God called you by the Holy Ghost; and when He called you He justified you, and when He justified you He put upon you the glory of His children and the heirship of His Kingdom. 'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on you, that you should be called, and should be'—not by name and imputation only, but by infusion and reality—'the sons of God.' Therefore the world knoweth you not, because it knew Him not; and if you are true followers of Jesus Christ, it will misunderstand and reject you. 'Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear

what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him,'—conformed to Him Who is the firstborn among the sons of God, because He is the Son of God, begotten of the substance of the Father before all worlds, and man of the substance of His Mother born in the world. Such is our predestination; 'and every man that hath this hope in him sanctifieth himself, even as He also is holy.'¹¹

¹¹ 1 S. John iii. 1-3.

VII.

THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.



THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness; and he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. ISAIAH xi. 1-3.

THESE words are a prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ. He is the 'rod out of the root of Jesse,' and the 'flower' that has risen up 'out of his root;' that is to say, He is the strength and the beauty of God. Upon the person of Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, in all the fulness of His grace and of His seven gifts, rested from the first moment of the Incarnation.

The mystery of the Incarnation was, in an especial manner, the work of the Holy Ghost. 'He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.' And the deified soul of Jesus Christ was sanctified by the Holy Ghost according to the same laws and in the same manner in which we are sanctified. There was, indeed, between Him and us this differ-

ence : that, being God Incarnate, His humanity had, as the Church teaches, a double anointing or unction of the Holy Ghost. First, His manhood was anointed by the uncreated sanctity of the Eternal Son Who assumed our humanity. And, secondly, it was anointed by the special indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The first anointing is exclusively His own, because He is God. The second anointing is the same that we receive, only differing in this: that the Holy Ghost rests upon every one of us as sinners and sanctifies us only in measure: but the deified soul of Jesus was sanctified with an immensity of grace.

In this prophecy it is said that the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost rested upon the Son of David, that is, the Son of God Incarnate. The soul of Jesus Christ was, in fact, the predestined and perfect original of the soul of man. In His deified soul there was exactly, and with one only exception, the same indwelling grace of which I have hitherto spoken as the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul of every one of us. There was the presence of the Holy Ghost; there was the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost; there was not faith, indeed, because He was always in the beatific vision; but there was hope, because the work of the Incarnation and of the Redemption of the world, until accomplished, was still a matter of the future; and

there was charity in the amplest perfection. There were also the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost even as they are in ourselves, and there they will be to all eternity. Therefore, first of all, the Holy Ghost rested in all His plenitude upon the Head of the Church, that is, Jesus Christ, and from the Head flowed down into the whole body. But the Church has both body and soul. The visible organisation which we call the Church—with its head and its members, its whole symmetry and structure, upon earth—is, after the analogy of the body of man, declared by the Holy Ghost to be the Body of Christ.¹ Saint Paul, in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, draws out this divine fact. But beside this visible body there is the invisible soul of the Church, which is the presence of the Holy Ghost infusing the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, sanctifying grace, the seven gifts, and the charity of God poured into the heart of the Church, whereby its unity is perpetually maintained. But the subject of which I have to speak to-day is neither the seven gifts in the Head of the Church, nor the seven gifts in the Body of the Church, but the seven gifts in every member of the Church, one by one. These seven gifts dwell in every one of you. As they dwelt in the

¹ Ephes. iv. 16.

soul of our Divine Lord, to Whom we shall be conformed, precisely in that manner they dwell in every one of us. They are inseparably united to sanctifying grace and charity; so that they who, through mortal sin, fall from sanctifying grace and charity no longer possess them.

1. What, then, is the nature of these seven gifts? I can only describe them in this way: the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost means that indwelling of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost whereby we are made holy. The seven gifts are seven habits or dispositions, as I have said before, implanted in the soul, permanently abiding in it and giving activity to the will, enabling it to elicit or to call forth certain spiritual acts.² The effect, then, of these seven gifts is to elicit the operations of grace. The word 'elicit' means to draw or strike out. When we strike a spark out of a flint we elicit fire. The fire lies in the flint; it is always there, it is inseparable from it. The spark which passes from the flint does not exhaust the fire that lies in it; it does

² 'Donum Spiritus Sancti aliud prorsus non est, nisi habitualis ac supernaturalis perfectio mentis creatæ a divina bonitate immediate per creationem infusa, in adjutorium expeditionemque virtutum concessa: per quam redditur mens creata a supernaturali rectore seu Spiritu Sancto faciliter mobilis.' Dionys. Carthusiën. *De Donis Spiritus Sancti*, tract. i. art. 16.

not even lessen it. So the acts of grace called forth by the seven gifts do not exhaust, but multiply and increase, our sanctification. Therefore they are inseparably united with sanctifying grace, and it is augmented by their activity. For instance, as the gift of science elicits the acts of faith, the virtue of faith is strengthened; as the gift of fortitude elicits the acts of hope, the virtue of hope is matured; as the gift of piety elicits the acts of charity, the virtue of charity is kindled and expanded. Charity is a virtue that springs from the love of God poured out into our hearts together with sanctifying grace; faith, hope, and charity are virtues or faculties implanted in the soul by the sanctifying operation of God, and they unite the soul with God.

The seven gifts, then, are seven powers or seven springs of action, whereby faith, hope, and charity are called into activity, and are also directed in their action. As I have said, the fire is always in the flint, but it does not appear until by a stroke we elicit it; in like manner, the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost is always in the soul that grows up united with God, but it is not always in activity unless it is brought into activity or elicited by these seven gifts. In this, grace is in strict analogy with nature. We possess three powers in our

soul—the power of reason, the power of love, and the power of will. I do not stop now to inquire how the will contains in itself both the power of love and the power of action. We are obliged to distinguish them for clearness. You well know that in the teaching and the training of your children you are obliged to elicit from their reason acts of attention; you are obliged to elicit from their will acts of perseverance and the patient desire to learn; you are obliged to elicit from their hearts habits which lead to the training and formation of their character. Therefore your will—that is, a superior will—is always acting upon the reason, heart, and will of your children, in order to teach, to train, and to elevate them into a mind and character higher than their own. In this same way, faith, hope, and charity perfect the reason, and the heart, and the will; they are the three supernatural virtues of grace which perfect the three natural powers of the soul. So also the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost elicit both from the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and from the three natural powers of reason, heart, and will, the acts which unite the soul more intimately with God, and therefore make it perfect. In this, then, we see what is the nature of these gifts. They are powers giving facility whereby the soul is called

into activity according to its natural and its supernatural perfections. And they are gifts of the Holy Ghost, because it is He Who, by His presence in us, acts upon us. Just as a harp is mute until the hand of a skilful player elicits the harmony which lies in its strings, so the soul of man, though containing the whole power of harmony with the will of God, does not manifest it of its own strength without the assistance of 'the Finger of God,' which is the Holy Ghost, touching its faculties, powers, and affections, both natural and supernatural. So far the analogy is true; but in one point it fails. The strings have no active power of their own. They can originate neither sound nor motion. But the soul of man is a principle of action, and the will has an originating power to initiate its natural action. But the perfection of the soul consists of two things—the action of the Holy Spirit of God upon it, and a voluntary, and perfect, and prompt conformity and response of the will to that operation of grace. And further: just as you cultivate the intelligence, and the heart, and the will of a child by constant and watchful education, so the seven gifts cultivate the soul. First of all, they cultivate the eye of the soul. We have by nature the power of sight, but we have not all the power of design, and

form, and perspective. The eye of some (from what cause I do not know) is incapable of those wonderful exercises of skill in painting and in sculpture which distinguish one man from another. The germs of these gifts appear in children almost before they can speak plain. Some men have a subtil and vigilant power of sight in observing the phenomena of the natural world, of which others seem to be entirely destitute. Or, again, I might give other examples to show that the power of sight is capable of cultivation, and that by training the eye you may bring it to a precision and delicacy of perception which seems almost like a new and higher gift. So it is with the soul. When the gifts of the Holy Ghost—that is to say, the light and action of the Holy Ghost—work upon the spiritual sight of faith, men gain a knowledge of the truth, an interior penetrating knowledge of revelation, which may be proved by a common example. The Holy Scripture is in the hands of everybody; and yet some men may read it from their childhood to the end of their life, and never understand it; sometimes a mere child will understand it at once. What makes the difference? The man, trusting in his own natural light and without spiritual discernment, reads the letter; the child, being in grace, having the love of God and the light of the

Holy Spirit in his heart, looks through the letter and beneath the letter, and reads the meaning. So, again, the eye of the soul acquires a discernment whereby some can instantly read the characters of others. They can tell the temptations of other men; they can read even their thoughts, and that by an insight which does not come from nature. It comes from the Holy Spirit. Once more, the eye of the soul acquires the power of seeing things afar off—that is, of foreseeing events, changes, contingencies, and the conjunctures of all these circumstances; so that men seem almost to prophesy. They can foretell, for instance, that such a man is going forward to his ruin, when nobody as yet could see the first inclination to a fall. A keen spiritual discernment in them has found out that there was a flaw somewhere. Now all these perceptions and discernments are the operations of the Holy Spirit working upon the soul in the form of knowledge, counsel, wisdom, understanding, which are the four gifts that perfect the intellect.

2. But, next, all men have an ear, and yet we know that many can never learn to play on a musical instrument, nor to form a note. No practice or toil can ever make them sing in time. Others, again, seem to be made of music. They can sing before they can talk; and with a rapidity which seems to be not so

much an acquisition as a gift, they cultivate the ear to perfection. Now what did our Divine Lord mean when He said, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,'³ but the plain truth that they in whose hearts the Holy Ghost reigns hear the word of God and understand ; while others who are without the Holy Ghost hear the sound of the words and do not answer because they do not understand ? And when Saint Paul says, 'Faith cometh by hearing,'⁴ he means the same thing—that the Gospel was preached equally to those who believed and to those who did not believe. What made the difference ? The difference was, because in those whose hearts were faithful to the call of the Holy Spirit the truth they heard generated faith ; but in those who had not the Spirit of God, or who, through pride, or presumption, or obstinacy, or prejudice, set themselves against what they heard, the truth elicited no faith. They did not understand it, because they knew not the voice of God. 'He that is of God heareth the words of God ; therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God.'⁵ What our Lord meant us to learn is simply this : that the spiritual ear, which the Holy Ghost makes keen and quick to listen, is not cultivated in those who, when they hear the truth, do not believe

³ S. Matt. xi. 15, &c.⁴ Rom. x. 17.⁵ S. John viii. 47.

it. 'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, for they know My voice ; but a stranger they follow not.'⁶

And then, once more, the soul has a taste, just as the body. Therefore the Psalmist says, 'Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.'⁷ Now there can be no doubt that the name of God and the word of God are not sweet to the great multitude of men ; and why ? Not because the Holy Ghost is not in them, but because these gifts of the Holy Ghost, as I will show hereafter, are suppressed and suffocated. The Psalmist says again, 'How sweet is Thy word unto my lips ; it is sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb.'⁸ And we know, in the lives of the saints, that some of them, as soon as they heard the name of God or the name of Jesus, have lost all memory of other things, and have been carried out of themselves with joy. No sweetness in the world, no sweetness of music, no sweetness of sensible taste, was to them comparable to the sweetness of the name of God or of the name of Jesus. And why was this ? We are not so moved. It was because the spiritual taste in them was cultivated ; because they were guided by the gift of wisdom—the name of which is *sapientia*: a word that signifies a knowledge by tasting the

⁶ S. John iii. 27.

⁷ Ps. xxxiii. 9.

⁸ Ib. cxviii. 103.

truth; a light to discern and to taste the sweetness of divine things. Now Saint Paul says all this in few words: 'The spiritual man judgeth all things; but he himself is judged by no man.'⁹ That is, he has a discernment whereby he can taste spiritual things; and no man can correct his discrimination, because men of the world do not understand the things of the Spirit of God; because they cannot tell sweet from bitter: they put bitter for sweet. 'The sensual man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot understand, because they are spiritually examined;'¹⁰ that is, tested, tried, proved, and known by the gift of the Spirit of God.

3. The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost perfect the whole soul; for in what does the perfection of the soul consist but in these three things—illumination of the reason, sanctification of the heart, and the union of the will with the will of God. This is the perfection of the soul in all its faculties. There are, as you know, four kinds of light, by which we can shape and govern our actions. There is the light of reason, sufficient in the order of nature, but at times both cold and dim. There are wide regions of truth in which reason can hardly see its road. Reason can

⁹ 1 Cor. ii. 15.

¹⁰ Ib. ii. 14.

see its way in the order of natural truths ; but without the Spirit of God it cannot see its path in the order of grace. Reason is a good light whereby to travel on the earth ; but it does not give light enough to show the way up the mountain which leads into the kingdom of God. It can lead us some way, and then we need another light, and reason delivers us over to that other guide. When reason has done its utmost in proving to us that God has revealed His will, then we believe that revelation to be divine ; after that faith guides us onward. We make an act of faith, which is the highest act of reason, and that act of faith delivers us over to a divine guide. Thenceforward reason and faith walk side by side. All the rest of our lives we are guided by reason and faith together. The lesser light is the light of reason, the greater light is the light of faith ; and these two are distinct, but indivisible for ever. And then, springing from reason and faith, there is the light of prudence, which is both natural and supernatural. But we have, lastly, another light which is higher than all ; and that is the light of faith made perfect by the four gifts of wisdom, and of understanding, and of knowledge, and of counsel. These four of the seven gifts perfect both the reason of man and the virtue of faith ; and, as I said before,

faith is the most perfect act of the reason, the highest, and the noblest, and the nearest to that eternal union of the intelligence with the uncreated wisdom of God. Such is the illumination of the reason.

But, next, the heart is perfected by sanctification; that is to say, the heart and the will (which, as I said in the beginning, may be taken together) are perfected by the other three of the seven gifts: namely piety, or the filial love of God and the fraternal love of our neighbour, which springs immediately from the love of God our Father; next, holy fear, whereby we would deliberately choose rather to lay down our lives than offend God, or even go into the danger of offending Him; and, lastly, fortitude, whereby we are made willing and strong to bear anything for His sake, to take up our cross and to follow Him. These seven gifts, then, elicit into action and expand into perfection the virtues of faith, hope, and charity; and these, again, make perfect the reason, heart, and will; and thereby the whole soul, in all its natural and supernatural perfections, is made perfect and united with God. And when these gifts are fully expanded, they have been well likened to the sails of a ship, which, when they are spread, catch every wind, and the more widely they are spread, the more wind is caught and the speedier is our course.

Such, then, are the gifts of the Holy Ghost ; and when the inspirations of the Holy Ghost find these gifts spread and expanded in the soul, they impel it swiftly onwards in its way towards God and eternity. But those who either have lost these spiritual gifts or by indolence have neglected to use them are like ships that are dismantled, which lie motionless upon the waters. The winds blow upon them in vain. There is no sail spread to catch them ; there is hardly power to impel them into motion. I am not speaking of those who have altogether forfeited grace by mortal sin, but of those who have hindered their advance and weakened the power of grace in their hearts by the frequent commission of venial sin. They may, indeed, be making progress, but it is slowly and uncertainly. They are making progress, with painful effort, with labour and noise, like those who are compelled to row with oars because they have no sail to set, or can set no sail even if they have it. They must depend upon the labour and toil of their own strength. Having lost the help of grace, they are endeavouring to force themselves onward in the way of God by straining the powers of nature, which can never bring a soul to salvation.

(1) Let us now make application of what I have said. The Holy Spirit of God is the creator of all

things. It was He Who ordered the first creation. 'The Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters.'¹¹ He impressed upon the first creation the law of its perfection; He gave to everything its form and fullness—to each after its kind. But in an especial sense He is the Author and Perfecter of the new creation of God, which springs from the Incarnation. And there are two operations which He is always carrying on in this new creation of the regenerate. He is always sanctifying the will of man, and He is always illuminating the reason of man; for He is the Illuminator and the Sanctifier: and this twofold office constitutes His work in the soul. When the Holy Ghost sanctifies the soul, He is creating the saints of God. We are all of us 'called to be saints.'¹² When you were regenerated, you were called to sanctity—imperfect it may be in this world, but perfect in eternity. The power of sanctity was then implanted in you. I am but repeating the words of the Holy Spirit, by whose guidance the Apostles wrote. Do not begin to count up the canonised saints, for I am not speaking of them only. I am also speaking of them, indeed, for they were once in the warfare and imperfections of this world just as you are now; they were as commonplace; they were

¹¹ Gen. i. 2.¹² Rom. i. 7.

as homely in their look and bearing ; they were as weak ; they were as sorely tempted ; they were buffeted ; they sinned ; they fell ; they were stained by their falls ; they rose again ; they were penitent ; they persevered unto the end. The saints now before the Throne in the kingdom of glory are only the ripe and perfect fruit which has been gathered from the mystical vine ; and we are the unripe and imperfect fruit hanging in their stead. You are all bound to be saints. The little children among us are the most like saints on earth ; for they are the freshest from the waters of regeneration, and as yet the world has not stained them, and their own will has not departed from God. They are in their baptismal innocence. And our Divine Saviour took a little child and set him in the midst even of Apostles, and said, ‘ Unless you become as one of these, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.’ We are, then, surrounded by saints. We think that saints are like the great mountains, or like the cedars of Lebanon, in the kingdom of God—seldom to be seen and afar off. There are saints standing amongst us, and we know them not. They do not know it themselves ; for sanctity sees only its own imperfections. And you were once like the saints ; you were once children fresh in the innocence of grace ; for you were

then humble, and unstained, and docile, and obedient. And there are other saints to be found on earth. In the multitude of the poor there are to be found the friends of Jesus and the followers of His poverty, and they are saints. ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit.’¹³ The state of poverty is a discipline of mortification and self-denial, of humility and submission. It generates the spirit of poverty, which is true perfection. ‘Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith?’¹⁴ ‘A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven?’¹⁵ ‘Woe unto you, O rich ; for you have received your consolation.’¹⁶ Why did our Divine Master, pitiful and tender as He is, speak so sternly ? Because riches generate pride ; and from pride spring covetousness, worldliness, selfishness, self-dependence, isolation, unsympathetic hearts—and hearts without sympathy are far off from God. Such hearts have little union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, or with the Holy Ghost. Happy, then, are the poor, whose life is hard and austere ; whose hunger and thirst, if they are borne in patience, are true fasting ; whose homes are more bare and empty than the cell of an anchorite ; whose whole life is a life of toil, that chastises both the body

¹³ S. Matt. v. 3.¹⁴ S. James ii. 5.¹⁵ S. Matt. xix. 23.¹⁶ S. Luke vi. 24.

and the will. Such a state generates detachment from self, and thankfulness, and dependence on the good providence and watchful care of our Heavenly Father. When our Divine Lord said, 'Blessed are ye poor,' He did not indeed bless those only who were poor in this world with external poverty. He gave this beatitude to all those, in whatsoever state they are, who are poor in spirit. It matters not what may be their outward state. They may possess in safety their wealth, their broad lands, their noble houses, their great titles, their prerogatives, royal or imperial, if only their hearts are poor before God, if they are detached from the world and detached from self. All that they possess externally will not hinder their sanctification any more than the external poverty of the poor will insure their sanctification. The richest and the noblest may be perfectly detached from this world, poor in spirit in the midst of all that it heaps upon them; and if so, their will is sanctified, and they are among the saints of God. Let us take examples of saints who by these seven gifts renounced the world.

One held an honourable and useful office in Rome. In the midst of the Pontifical Court, with all its lawful splendours, he found the atmosphere too dangerous for him. He therefore renounced it, and

became a priest and spent his whole life in charity for the salvation of souls. Such was Saint Caietan. Another was practising at the bar, one day let slip a slight untruth. He was so wounded in his conscience, that in the greatest fear he renounced at once the profession in which he had all before him. Such was Saint Alphonsus. Saint Rose of Lima was by nature beautiful, and had an appearance which attracted notice. She cut off her hair, lest she should draw around her temptations which might be fatal to humility and to forgetfulness of self. These were actions prompted by the gift of holy fear. The gift of fortitude has created the martyrs. It made Saint Pancratius, a little boy, as strong as Saint Sebastian, who was a leader of the legions of Rome. It made Saint Agnes, a child of fourteen years, as strong in will and inflexible in courage as Saint Lawrence and the martyred Pontiffs of the Church. Fortitude made our great Saint Thomas of Canterbury. For six long years, with a martyr's will and a clear foresight of the death that awaited him, he went onward without swerving to his hour of martyrdom. But, as I said before, it is not only the saints who are canonised who could do these things, but you also, if you have the gift of fortitude in your will. You are even now willing to bear any cross that may come

upon you rather than betray your faith ; you will not be ashamed of the scorn or the laughter of the world ; you will not be afraid of its malice ; you will not fear the accusations that may be hurled at you. You will say in the light of God's presence, ' I know that these bitter words are the badge of the disciples of Jesus ; the world's hatred is His bequest. I know that the faith for which I am cast out is the truth which the pencil of the Holy Ghost has written upon the intelligence of the Holy Catholic Church, and I will gladly die for it.' More than this, if you have fortitude in you, you will not be afraid of a little penance, of a little fasting, of a little abstinence, a little voluntary poverty, a little sharp dealing with yourselves, a little crossing of your own self-indulgence, a little secret privation, which none will ever know save your Heavenly Father Who seeth in secret. You may carry a penitent will even under the soft raiment that you wear, because your state in life demands it. Go through the world unnoticed if you can. Those that make themselves singular in their dress or manners are seldom free from vanity. Those who make outward show of their austerities or their penances are the least likely to persevere, because singularity generates self-consciousness, and self-consciousness generates pride. Secret privations,

secret sacrifices of your own will, which will never be known until all things are revealed, are surer instruments of perfection than chains and shirts of hair. The Holy Ghost in this way creates His saints. And when I say saints, I mean such as you are, or such as you may be. I can say nothing to encourage you more on the one hand, and I can say nothing to humble us more on the other. Saints, then, are made by the gifts that sanctify the will.

(2) Next, it is by the sanctification of the intellect that the Holy Ghost creates the doctors of the Church. I will not dwell on this; it is a subject which ought to be taken by itself. Faith is like the sun, and theology is like the rays which flow from it. This great radiance of the faith is partly what the world storms against as dogma, or dogmatic theology; partly it is what the world cannot understand, that is, mystical theology; partly what the world hates, ascetic theology; and partly that which the world is always violating, I mean moral theology. And these four great provinces of divine truth are cultivated in the Church by men whom the Holy Ghost illuminates and sanctifies for that work. Saint Athanasius, Saint Augustine, Saint Leo, our great Saint Anselm of Canterbury, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Bonaventure, Saint Bernard, Saint Bernardine of

Sienna, Saint Alphonsus, and a multitude who have not been canonised on earth, though they are saints in heaven, have been illuminated by the Holy Ghost, by the four gifts which perfect the intellect, for the illumination of the Church. They have each, according as the gifts of science or counsel, intellect or wisdom, prevailed in them, elaborated and taught the science of dogmatic, or mystical, or ascetic, or moral truth. To these may be added the Pontiffs who have legislated for the Church. The sacred Canon law against which the rebellious wills and shallow intellects of men have ever clamoured is the noblest, highest, purest legislation that mankind has ever known. The jurisprudence of the Church is the perfection of wisdom and justice. And here the difference between the Church and the world comes out into light. The doctors and legislators of the world may be unsanctified men. The doctors and law-givers of the Church are created by the Holy Ghost. Of the men of science who are the doctors of the world at this day, many openly deny the existence of God. We are living in a century when men pride themselves on their intellectual culture, and on the illumination of science, and I know not what; but it is an intellectual culture which prides itself upon its independence of God, and its divorce from the sanctification of the

will. The whole power of 'progress and modern civilisation' is at this moment attempting to accomplish four things—to expunge God from science, to drive His name out of education from the highest to the lowest school, to shut out His revealed law from the whole public order of states, and from the whole culture of the human intellect. What wonder if the apostles and prophets, the doctors and Pharisees, of modern civilisation rose up and threw dust in the air at the promulgation of the Syllabus? But I may not go on. The Holy Ghost creates saints, and the Holy Ghost creates doctors, but fools create themselves. And who are they whom the Word of God numbers among the fools? Those who have not the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost in them, or those who having them by regeneration will not use the faculties they have received; those who, having the light of the Holy Spirit, which would make them wise and understanding, suffocate these gifts by empty pride. I use the word 'fool' because the Word of God has used it before me, and the word 'fool' in the Holy Scripture is equivalent to the word sinner.

'Fools despise wisdom'¹⁷ is the saying of the Holy Ghost Himself. And the man that prefers this world to the next makes the fool's bargain. They

¹⁷ Prov. i. 7.

who, having treasures within them beyond all that man can give, squander them like spendthrifts and wreck them like bankrupts, are fools indeed. And how do they do this? In two ways. They do it, first, by any mortal sin, which at once extinguishes all sanctifying grace: and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost go with it. They do it, next, by a habit of venial sin, which stifles the operations of grace. I hope we may believe that we are in a state of sanctifying grace. Nevertheless, we may make ourselves fools even while we abide in a state of grace. We may do so by the venial sins which we commit every day with such facility and in such a multitude. Like as the fine dust which gathers gradually and imperceptibly upon a timepiece slackens its motion and destroys its precision in marking the time, so the multitude of venial sins gradually clouds the conscience, and chokes and slackens the action of these seven gifts. At last there is formed a habit, and then a character, opposite and repugnant to these seven virtues; as, for example, where pride gradually forms itself wisdom is cast out; where pride is wisdom goes out of itself, for where pride is wisdom will not dwell. Pride is, therefore, the supreme folly of man. Again, where there is presumption and rashness there is no holy fear. A man that is not afraid of the occasions of sin

will soon fall. Again, people are afraid of the world, or they love the world and worship of the world, or they applaud the world that they may be applauded again, that they may get into society, or that they may gain position or the notice of those whose names are known in the world. What fortitude is there in such empty hearts? They are ashamed of the Name of our Divine Lord. Be sure of this, that His disciples will always be looked down upon. It is in some of these many ways that we form pride, selfishness, and worldliness. And these things hinder the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and at last extinguish them. All this is what Saint Paul has said in words I have already quoted. ‘The sensual man,’ or, as the word is in the original, the animal man, the natural man, ‘perceiveth not the things of the Spirit; for they are foolishness unto him, neither shall he perceive them, because they are spiritually discerned.’¹⁸ Just as the spiritual man is supernatural, and the world invisible is, to him, more real and sensible than the world that he can see—and he lives for that world, and for God Who reigns in it, and for the interests of the kingdom of God—so the unspiritual man is a man who lives for this visible and perishing world. The worldly and natural man lives for every-

¹⁸ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

thing that is worldly. Nothing but what he can see, and handle, and touch is real to him. Everything that he can see is substantial, but nothing that he cannot touch, handle, and see has action or power over him. This is the state in which many begin; but what is the state in which they may end? The Apostle Saint Jude has told us: 'These be they who separate themselves, sensual men not having the Spirit.'¹⁹ Here is the history of heretics and schismatics, and all those who set themselves up against the truth and the Church of God. Here is the secret of the fall of the worldling, of the folly, of the pride of those whom I have described.

(3) Being by no merits of our own, but by sovereign grace in the light of the wisdom of God, let us pray every day, 'Lead us not into temptation,' but preserve us from the folly of our own hearts. Be devout to the person of the Holy Ghost. 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'²⁰ 'If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha.'²¹ But if a man does not love the Holy Ghost, he will sin against Him. If he sin against Him, 'he shall never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come.'²² But there is no command to

¹⁹ S. Jude 19. ²⁰ 1 S. John ii. 15. ²¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 22. ²² S. Matt. xii. 32.

love the Holy Ghost ; and why ? Because the Holy Ghost is the Love of God and the Giver of love. He is the Charity of God. He is poured forth into our hearts. He is the Holy Ghost Who is given unto us. There is therefore no need of commandment to love Him. If we have God the Holy Ghost in us, we cannot but love Him. We shall realise His personality ; we shall know Him to be co-eternal and co-equal to the Father and the Son ; we shall be conscious of His presence ; we shall know His voice and His power, and we shall feel His friendship ; we shall remember all day long that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost, that He dwells in us ; we shall keep at the greatest distance from every contact with sin and from its occasions ; we shall not endure a soil or a stain upon that white robe with which He invested us in baptism, which also He cleanses with such diligence and with such tenderness every day of our life, whensoever we make an act of contrition.

Remember, then, His presence ; walk in the light with which He encompasses you. Be faithful to His inspirations. A heart that corresponds with His inspirations is enlarged and expanded. And the gifts of the Holy Ghost in us are like the buds upon the trees which are always unfolding into flower and

fruit. 'We are not straitened in Him,' as the Apostle says; 'we are straitened in ourselves.' Our hearts will be enlarged, and we shall run the way of God's commandments, if we expand with the grace of the Holy Ghost. A heart so enlarged is a heart that is full of the peace of God—a heart full of strength, a heart full of God Himself. And what is the bliss of eternity? It is this: God the Holy Ghost will transfigure the faith He has given us into the light of glory. And when by the light of glory He has perfected our intellect, with the gifts of wisdom and of understanding, of knowledge and of counsel we shall see God; and when He has made perfect our heart in filial piety and holy fear, and in the virtue of fortitude, we shall be united with God in love for ever. This is the wedding garment which the Holy Ghost will put upon us. The soul will be thereby elevated and united with God; and then in His light we shall see light, and 'the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and our God our glory.'²³

²³ Isaias lx. 19.

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VIII.

THE GIFT OF HOLY FEAR.

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THE GIFT OF HOLY FEAR.

And He shall be filled with the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

ISAIAH xi. 3.

THESE words were spoken of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are a prophecy of the unction of the Holy Ghost, which should rest in all its fulness upon the head of the Incarnate Son, the Messiah—that is, the Anointed. And therefore the fear of the Lord spoken of in this place is not a fear which arises from sin, for in Him was no sin. It is a fear which is one of the perfections of the human soul, and is also a gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now the gifts of the Holy Ghost are certain habitual dispositions, or certain supernatural faculties of the soul by which it has a tendency and a power to attain to special perfections. Fire has a tendency to ascend; water has a tendency to descend. The nature of fire and of water contains in itself these two tendencies. The eye has a tendency, if it be trained, to continual development of more perfect

sight. The ear, if it be cultivated, has a tendency to acquire a more perfect perception of harmony. Just so the fear which arises from the consciousness of sin, if it be purified by grace, ripens at last into the fear which is a gift of the Holy Ghost, and is called the gift of holy fear.

We have already seen that of these seven gifts, three perfect the will and four perfect the intellect.

The three that perfect the will are, holy fear, piety, and fortitude. The four that perfect the intellect, or reason, are understanding, wisdom, science, and counsel. Of these four I will speak hereafter. We will take now the gift of holy fear. Remember that these seven gifts are given to every baptised soul. You have every one of you received them; but they lie dormant in the soul until they are cultivated and brought out into activity. As I said before, the eye and the ear have dormant perfections which are never known until they are cultivated; so these seven gifts of the Holy Ghost need cultivation that they may be brought to their perfection. They were all given to you in your Baptism, and they all exist simultaneously in every soul so long as it is in a state of grace. They are at once and all together forfeited if any one falls into mortal sin. But so long as the soul is in union with God, these seven

gifts are all present. Some, perhaps, lie dormant altogether, all of them, indeed, at least in some degree, but they are all simultaneously present in the soul. I say this because we should form a false conception if we supposed them only to act successively and in order of time. They do not act one before the other, nor does one spring in succession out of the other; but they act all together, like as the faculties of the intellect, which are all simultaneously at work in the mind. All are present, all are in activity, though some are more fully developed than others.

To make the gift of holy fear more intelligible, let us examine what are the different kinds of fear.

There are four distinct kinds. The first is called a worldly fear; that is to say, the fear which exists in the soul of every man who is living without God in the world. This is a fear of losing the things that he loves. And what are the things that a worldly man loves? Simply the things of this life. He loves the world, its wealth, its honours, its pleasure, its friendship, so far, that is, as it ministers to his enjoyment or his profit. This is a sordid fear. All men of the world are sordid, and the more worldly the more sordid. They are haunted by the dread of losing the things on which they have set

their heart. Now this worldly fear is like the sorrow of the world, which the Apostle says 'worketh death.'¹ Godly sorrow works the conversion of the soul unto penance and salvation. The sorrow of the world you see in such people when they are afflicted. Not knowing God, they do not turn to Him for consolation. They devour themselves with grief; they gnaw their own hearts. Such a sorrow, unrelieved by supernatural light or solace, works death. People lose their reason, break their health, and often die from disappointed ambition, ruin of fortune, wreck of hopes. The fear of the world is like its sorrow. Ambitious or covetous men, who have set their whole hearts upon something of this world, are always in fear that they shall fail; and nine times out of ten they do fail, and, worn out in brain and heart, break down and die. This is a fear which belongs not to Heaven but to Hell. It is no gift of the Holy Ghost, but a perpetual grieving of His eternal love.

Secondly, there is a fear which is called servile fear, because it is the fear of slaves. Now the fear of slaves is the fear of punishment, the fear of the lash, the fear of chains and the fear of bondage. A servile fear in the service of God means this: that a man forsakes sin only because he fears hell; and, as

¹ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Saint Augustine says, the man that does not sin only because he fears hell shows that he hates hell, and not sin. There is no hatred of sin as sin in him. He has no purity, no piety, no generosity. There is no aspiration for better things. He seems to say: 'If there were no hell and no eternal punishment, I would sin; and I only wish that there were no eternal punishment attached to these sins, because I could then commit them with impunity. I would commit many sins, if I did not know that by committing them I shall incur the eternal punishment of God.' This is a servile fear, base and slavish.

Thirdly, there is what is called the initial fear, or the fear of the Lord in its beginning. And that is in every one of us. I do not say, dear brethren, that there is not also a mixture of servile fear in every one of us, because no doubt there is. In proportion as flesh and blood prevail over the Spirit and grace of God in us there is this servile fear; for, as Saint John says, 'perfect charity casteth out fear';² so, just in proportion as we grow in the love of God this servile fear is cast out, that is, it is purified of its love or will to sin. This initial fear means a fear which springs, at least in some degree, from the love of God, perhaps not as yet in any high degree—

² 1 St. John iv. 18.

but there is this higher motive, namely, a desire to possess God in eternity—a desire to save our soul, a desire to enter into eternal life. These are things that we hope for by the light of faith, and these show that we have at least the beginning of the love of God in us. This initial fear, therefore, is a higher kind of fear springing from the Holy Spirit; but it is not the gift of which we are speaking.

Fourthly—and this is the gift of the fear of the Lord—there is what is called filial fear, the fear, not of slaves, but of sons. It is a fear like that of a dutiful and loving son, who desires in all things to do the will of his father; not merely to escape punishment, no, nor to obtain a reward—it is neither servile, nor is it mercenary—but because of the love of his father, because of his Father's goodness, and because he knows that his own bliss is inseparable from his father's love. Therefore he stands in a filial fear of offending him. It is not the terror with which we regard a taskmaster. It is the fear with which we regard a great love, a great tenderness, a great majesty; towards which we bear ourselves with reverence, submission, and obedience. In proportion as we love the person we fear to offend him. As love grows this filial fear becomes more perfect. The more tenderly a child loves its parent,

the more sensitive and delicate it is to do not only its father's commands, but what it knows to be its father's desire. A mere look or glance of the eye is enough to check, or to reprove, or to guide, a sensitive child. This, then, is the filial fear which is described as the gift of the Holy Ghost.³

Let us take an example which will put this subject fully before us, and then I will go on to describe what are the fruits, or workings, of this filial fear. The example I will take is that of our Divine Lord Himself. As I have said, this prophecy of Isaias is of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom was no sin; in Whom there could be nothing servile, nothing mercenary, nothing of self; and yet in Him this holy fear was perfect. It was, first, a profound worship and veneration of God. It was, secondly, a perfect dependence upon God; for, as man, His human soul was capable of all the same perfections that we are. Thirdly, it was a profound submission to the will of God. Now these three things constitute this filial fear—worship, dependence, and submission. You see these things in their perfection throughout the

³ 'Timor est habitus voluntatis per quem efficitur homo optime mobilis a supernaturali inspiratione Paracleti ad vitandum omne malignum secundum directionem seu opem Spiritus Sancti supernaturaliter in homine operantis.' Dionys. Carthusian. *De Donis Spir. Sanct.* tract. iii. art. 44, *Oper. Minor.* tom. i. Cologne, 1532.

whole life of our Lord, in the whole of His obedience, and in the whole of His Passion, which was His obedience made perfect by suffering. And in His Passion we see these three perfections of holy fear in their fulness. We will go on to examine what are the workings, or, I may say, what are the fruits and the effects, of this filial fear in us.

1. The first is a profound consciousness that in the sight of God we are but sin and nothing. Just in proportion as we have a sense of the perfection of God and of the eternity of God, this consciousness will be deeper. A Council of the Church in early days said that of ourselves we have nothing but falsehood and sin. Now what did the Council mean by those two words? It meant that God made us after His own likeness, and therefore made us good; but that we have superadded to our nature no perfection of our own, for we had none to give. Yet there are two things we could add to it—we could deface His image, and so falsify it; we could falsify it, and so make it sinful. Therefore, when the Council said that we have nothing of our own except falsehood and sin, it meant this: that we have soiled our innocence and have degraded our dignity. Such is the state of man after the Fall, and that state is our own work. What, then, is the meaning of saying

that before God we are sin and nothing? It means simply this: first, that we are, every one of us, sinners before God. We are sinners by original sin, though our original sin is inherited, and no act of our own. Nevertheless, we are properly sinners before God, because we are born into this world of the fallen race of Adam; and our sin consists in this: that we are born deprived of the grace of the Holy Ghost, and with three wounds: one in the intellect, that is, ignorance; one in the heart, that is, passion; one in the will, that is, infirmity. Such is our original sin. But, secondly, we are actual sinners before God. There is not one of us that has not the consciousness within him of a whole world of thoughts, words, and deeds, from his childhood to this day, knowingly and wilfully committed against the eternal law of God; and therefore we are every one of us guilty before God. No human heart can conceive what is the multitude, what is the innumerable multitude, of the sins that we have perhaps committed even in act; and if we cannot count up the sins we have committed in act, who shall count up the sins that he has committed in words? And who but God alone can know the number of the sins we have committed in thought? Therefore before God we have been, or we are, each one a world of iniquity; a world of darkness;

a world of confusion ; and therefore a world of spiritual death. But even more than this. God created everything that He made with a special law and for a special purpose. He created the stars in the firmament to give light ; He created the trees of the earth to bear fruit ; He created our souls to manifest the light of His image ; and He implanted in us the faculties and powers of the soul that we might bear fruits of an intelligent and deliberate obedience. What, then, are we in His sight ? Wandering stars whose light is dim or quenched ; barren fig-trees whom He spares from year to year, from hour to hour ; autumn trees, as the Apostle says, without fruit. The fruit that we ought to have borne—the fruit of innocence, the fruit of sanctity, the fruit of justice, the fruit of piety, the fruit of generosity, or, at least, the fruit of penance—where are they ? What is our life ? And therefore before God we are not only guilty of sin, but we are fruitless and unprofitable ; we are unworthy ; we have neglected the graces He has given us ; we have used our intellect for all manner of untruth ; we have used our heart for all manner of disorderly affections ; we have used our wills for all manner of conscious variance to His holy will. So far we are but sin. And next, we are but nothing in His sight. We are mere creatures,

and therefore we have only a borrowed and dependent existence. For what is a creature? There is but One Who exists, and it is He Whose name is 'I am Who am.' All other beings are but as rays that come forth from Him; they are mere acts of His will, emanations of His will, and they are sustained by His will, and they exist as long as He wills them to exist; and if for a moment He were to withdraw that will from them they would exist no more. And such are we. We are creatures who have come forth from His omnipotence, and are sustained by His almighty power, and we should pass away into nothing if that almighty power were withdrawn. And yet we use the power He has given us to sin against Him; and yet we squander the faculties which He has given us for His service. We stand before Him like the stars that give no light, like the trees that give no fruit. And therefore I exaggerated nothing in the beginning when I said that if we have the gift of holy fear in us, knowing God as He is and ourselves as we are, we shall have a present consciousness that in His sight we are but sin and nothing.

2. Now wherever there is this holy fear there is a profound horror of sin. Imagine to yourself for one moment what must have been the horror of the Son of God—the sinless Son of God—when He

came into the world and found Himself encompassed by sinners, in contact with sin, tempted by the devil; when He saw sin and death ravaging the world, men dying everywhere because they were stricken with sin, and were therefore stricken with death. What must have been the horror of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in looking upon a sinful and dying world consumed by sin. In proportion, then, as this gift of holy fear is in the heart of any man, in that proportion he will have a horror of sin. When he looks upon sin he would shudder as if he were looking upon leprosy; for a sinner is a leper crusted with disease, which is eating away the very substance of his being. If a man were suddenly conscious of a spot of leprosy upon his hand, he would be horror-stricken. How is it that we can see ourselves spotted all over, and yet be without fear? Nay, more, if we have this holy fear we shall see that sin paralyses the powers of the soul. The human frame, so strong, so dignified, so self-controlled in its perfections, when it is struck by the palsy, can no longer maintain its own stability, its own government, its own powers of act or will. Such, in the sight of God, is a soul which is struck by sin. And, still further, when sin takes possession of the soul it extinguishes the senses. What more helpless than the blind, or what more pitiable than

the deaf and the dumb? But what is a sinner who has ceased to see God, who has ceased to hear His voice, who cannot speak a word of prayer or of praise? The blind and the deaf and the dumb are not objects of compassion so great as he. Therefore the sight of sin is a sight of horror, and any one who has holy fear in him must hate sin, and shrink from it with horror. But more than this, it is not only a ruin of the creature, it is also a privation. A cloud and a darkness settle upon the reason and upon the heart, so as to hide from them the light of God's countenance. The union of the soul with God is strained by every venial sin that a man commits; and, in the end, the union of the soul with God is broken. But what is more terrible than to be separated from God? If a sinner could only see his state, he could hardly live. A body out of which the soul has departed strikes us with horror. If we were to turn a corner of the road and find a lifeless corpse, we should start back with a shock; and yet what in the sight of God is one who is in mortal sin, and is therefore separated both in soul and body from God? There is nothing in God's creation more horrible. And those who have in them the holy fear of sin see sin and death as God sees them, and have a horror in the sight. But, still further than this, they have con-

sciousness of what God made them in the beginning. No instrument of music, however perfect, is to be compared in its perfection to the harmony of the human soul in the unity of all its faculties and of all its powers. But if you take in hand a musical instrument that has been broken or jarred, all its notes jangle in discord. What its beauty was we can still perceive; what its ruin is every note declares. So it is with the soul. How beautiful, how full of harmony, when God made it. How broken and harsh, how full of discord now in all its tones. Such is a human soul under the power of sin. It is the most pitiable sight that God and His holy angels can look upon. And those who have the holy fear of God in them will partake of that intuition, that gaze of sorrow and of dread. We read in the life of Saint Catharine of Genoa that, out of a profound sense of humiliation, she prayed Almighty God to grant that she might see herself as she was seen in His sight. Her prayer was heard. The light fell upon her, and she saw herself and her sins as God saw them; and having seen that sight of horror for a moment, she prayed the more earnestly that the light might be taken away, that she might see herself no longer, because under the vision of herself she could not exist. This, then, is the second effect of holy fear.

3. The third is this : that all those who have this fear of sin in them, if they detect in themselves the least spot of evil, will go at once to accuse themselves. They cannot rest while it is upon them. They cannot bear to be soiled in the sight of God, or to delay going to Him that they may be cleansed. Just as the leper who sees the first beginning of the leprosy will go at once to the physician, so, when they detect in themselves the first rising of a spot of sin, they will at once go to be made clean. If our face were soiled, should we go into the presence of any one whom we reverence? If our hands were soiled, should we go into the midst of our friends? How, then, shall we dare to go into the presence of God with a heart that is stained? He sees the heart as we see the face. If there be a spot in the heart, those who have holy fear in them will at once accuse themselves that the Holy Ghost may cleanse them. They will accuse themselves, not only of deliberate venial sin, but also of the sinful infirmities which come from our want of holy fear. We are not speaking, remember, of mortal sin, for holy fear only exists in those who are in a state of grace. It is holy fear, then, that prompts to the confession of venial sins. They are not, indeed, necessary matter of confession; but a pure heart, which fears the approach of evil,

when it discovers venial sin, will not rest until it has humbled itself before God, and cast itself at the feet of our Lord.

We must also remember this. If you had ever been wounded, there would be a scar left behind; if you had ever been burnt, there would remain the scar of the burn as long as you live; and those who have in time past been guilty of any sin whatsoever have still remaining upon them what I may call the scar and the sear of those sins. But they have more than this. They have a proneness, and a weakness, and a facility to fall again. Let us take, for example, temper. We are all liable to anger. There is not one of us that is not more or less tempted to sudden sallies and impetuosities of temper. Well, now, there was a time when these temptations were comparatively slight. It was by the frequent giving way to them that they became impetuous and strong. Nevertheless, we are sorry after we have been carried away. We have tried to control our temptations, and in some part we have succeeded. We have confessed them, and have been absolved. But you well know that the habit of indulging temper increases the proneness to impetuosity. The effect of the past lingers as a habit. Though repented of, it still remains to be our trial and chastisement. Or let me take pride. Some

people in the early days of their life indulge their pride. When they come to know themselves, they are humbled. But the pride is there, and the pride is stronger and harder to control because of past indulgence. So, again, with the will. We know what is the fault of wilfulness, as we call it. Many a person who was wilful in childhood and in youth, but has striven for years to control his will, is afflicted with a headstrong mind for the rest of his life by reason of the wilfulness indulged in early days. Here, therefore, are faults which awaken, and even increase, the gift of holy fear. They keep us watching, and make us afraid. They show us our weakness and our liability to fall, and thereby they show us our need to watch over ourselves and to mistrust ourselves, and to trust in God alone.

4. Another effect of this holy fear is to make us watch over our external conduct in the world. You remember the words of the Apostle: 'Brethren, the time is short. It remaineth that they also who have wives be as if they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away.'⁴ It is lawful to use the world; 'for every

⁴ 1 Cor. vii. 29-31.

creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected that is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.’⁵ But few there are who use this world without abusing it. What is the meaning of abusing the world? We are put into the world by God Himself: it is our place of duty. The world is our place of trial; the world is, so to speak, the means whereby we are to attain our last end—that is, the vision of God. And if we use this world with a view to this end—if we set God above all things, and use the world only in so far as is consistent with the service of God—then we do not abuse it. But if we use the world as the end for which we live—if we live in its pleasures, and its possessions, and its ambitions, for their own sake, as ends out of God and below God—then we abuse it. We know well what a worldly character means. It means not necessarily a person that deliberately rejects God, or forgets God, or puts the world before God. A man who is trying to serve two masters is a worldly man. When the world ceases to tempt him, he will turn to God. When it begins to draw him back, he will turn again to the service of the world. He loves its honours, its popularity, its prosperity, its great friendships. Like a strong magnet, it draws the needle to itself.

⁵ 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

The gift of holy fear will make a man stand on his guard against the world. He will say: 'I will not of my choice go into any place, or society, or business, or profession in which I know I shall be surrounded by the fascinations of the world. I know that I cannot trust myself. In the long-run they will probably be too strong for me. My safety is in keeping out of them. If God calls me into them, He will keep me, for then it will be His will and not mine.' Moreover, Saint Paul says: 'All things are to me lawful, but not all things expedient.'⁶ There are many lawful things which it is better for us altogether to refuse. One way of using things is not to use them. If we take the full pleasure of all that is lawful, it is almost certain that we shall pass over the limit of a lawful use, and go onward before long into that which is unlawful. The way to use lawful things safely is to keep far within the boundary, and the farther we keep within the boundary the safer we shall be. The most sparing use of lawful things is safest. Saint Jerome says: 'A diet always scanty is better than three days of fasting.' Moreover, in all things we have to think of the example we shall be to others round about us. If they see us taking the full enjoyment of everything lawful, and sometimes,

⁶ 1 Cor. vi. 12.

at least, seeming to go beyond the line, the effect upon others may be full of danger. We may, perhaps, be able to keep ourselves from going further, but those who are led by our example may not be able so to do. It is therefore a high part of the law of charity so to use even lawful things as not to be an occasion of falling to others.

Another part of this outward watchfulness is the custody of our senses. How much sin enters in by the eye. How much by the ear. What soils and stains reach the heart, which would never be there if the eye were closed against a great deal that meets it, and if the ear were turned away from a great deal that falls upon it. The prophet says, 'Death climbs up by the windows.'⁷ The eyes and the ears are the windows of the soul; and through the eyes and the ears the stains and fascinations of sin, and the fiery darts of the evil one, are cast into the heart.

I need hardly give you particular instances; yet, to make my meaning clear, I will mention one or two. You will supply the rest. Books, that speak through the eye, may be the worst of tempters. If books be bad—and sometimes they are especially bad—no tempters can be worse. And they are especially bad when the badness is concealed; when that which is

⁷ Jeremias ix. 21.

concealed, if expressed in explicit grossness, would shock and repel; but when thinly veiled it is read without a blush, and the heart is poisoned before it is aware. Such books are whisperers with fair faces and foul hearts. I need not speak of the abuse of the tongue, nor of the listening to words and tales and unseemly jokes on matters which ought never to be heard or spoken. I must, however, add the abuse of our daily bread by fastidious or self-indulgent delicacy or immoderate use of meat and drink. How many secret sins are committed in eating and in drinking; how much real pampering of taste, how much excess, are concealed under the veil of social decency or custom. No human eye detects them, but they are visible to God. And how many who have begun by some small immoderation in childhood and in refined homes have ended at last in a bondage of habitual excess, and in the degradation of name and fame; outcast and lost.

5. And, lastly, this gift of the Holy Spirit will keep a still more watchful guard over our heart within. The world takes cognisance only of the exterior actions of sin, and thinks itself innocent if it have done nothing which other men can see. Strange blindness; and that with the words of our Divine Redeemer before us, Who tells us that the worst of sins may be com-

mitted in the heart without ever having been suspected by the world. For the essential malice of sin is not the external perpetration of the act. It is the internal desire and intent to do wrong. This it is which makes manslaughter differ from murder. The man who commits manslaughter and the man who commits murder both take away life; but one did not intend to kill, the other did intend it. The intention makes the difference. So with every sin that man can commit; he has committed it in the heart before it is ever accomplished by the deed. The end is intended, and the will consenting makes the man guilty before God though he may never execute it in act. How much sin there is in the heart which men pass by without so much as acknowledging to themselves; or, if they acknowledge it to themselves, they at once absolve themselves without so much as a true thought of its guilt. Therefore it is that they who have a holy and filial fear of offending our Heavenly Father will have a great watchfulness over the deliberate acts of the heart, over its thoughts, and its imaginations, and its memories, and its desires. They will close their eyes and their ears, that they may keep their inmost soul pure, and may inherit the blessing promised to the clean of heart. Not only will they watch over their deliberate acts,

but over those half-deliberate acts, those internal adhesions of their thought and will to the rising of temptation, lest they should become internal sin. For when the will consents the sin is theirs.

Now Saint Augustine has left in his book of *Confessions* a vivid tracing of the internal conflict which I have been trying to describe. The sum of his words is this. He says: 'What marvel is this? My mind commands my hand, and it obeys; my whole body is in obedience to my will, and what my will commands my whole body executes. But when my mind commands my will, my will does not obey; and my body, which is external to my mind, is obedient to my mind, and my will, which is a part of my mind, is disobedient to my mind. I command my body, and it obeys me. I command my will, and it will not obey me.' And then he says, 'Whence comes this marvel?' And he answers, 'It is because my will is divided. Sin has wounded it in part, and in part God has healed it; and therefore I partly will what is right and I partly will what is wrong. I have but one will, but that will is divided; and therefore when my better will commands my worse, the worse will does not obey.' And what is this, dear brethren, but what the Apostle says in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: 'The good that I will,

I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do. When I have a will to do good, evil is present with me; for I delight in the law in the inward man. But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity, to sin and death. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?' This conflict is in every one of you. You are daily conscious of it. Pray God, then, to give you the gift of holy fear, that the better and higher will in you may be made strong, dominant, imperial, so as to subdue and put down the motions of the worse and lower will, which, like the sea, never rests, casting up its mire.⁸

Now let us make application of all this. We have every one of us had this worldly fear upon us in times past. I dare say there was a time in your life when you had a greater fear of losing the favour of the world than of losing the love of God. There was a time, I dare say, when the thought of being poor was more terrible to you than the thought of being stripped of the grace of God; when the thought of being hated by the world, or being looked down upon by men, was far more afflicting to you than the thought that God and His saints were turning their faces from you. I hope that fear of the world is not

⁸ Isaias lvii. 20.

in any of you now. Then it may be you passed into the state of servile fear. You knew what was right, and you were tempted to do what was wrong; and you said, 'If I only dared to do it, I would; but I know that if I do it I shall lose my soul; and I am afraid of judgment, and I am afraid of hell.' And God, in His patience, bore with your ungenerous heart. Then you passed out, it may be, through that region of servile fear, until at last the love of God became a little stronger and a little more constraining. You then began to serve God for the love of God, and for the desire of eternal happiness. You hoped to be saved, and you would not offend God because you desired to see His face in eternity.

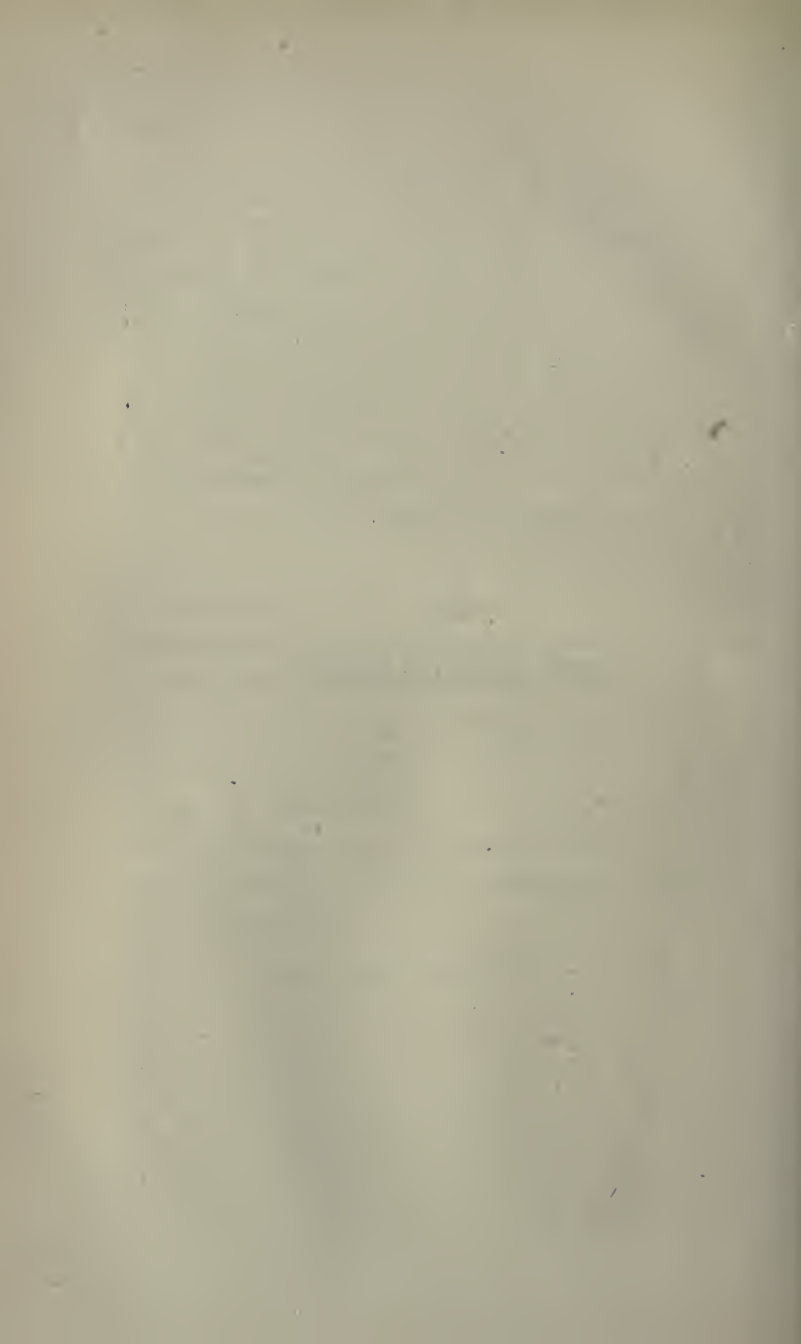
Be of good heart then, dear brethren. The less you have of this fear, the more cause to be afraid; the more you have of this fear, the less reason you have to be afraid. If you fear lest you should offend God, lest you should be cast out of His sight, lest you should lose the vision of His face in eternity, such a fear is the beginning of love. No man fears to lose that which he does not care for. That which we prize we fear to lose, and we fear to lose it in the measure in which we love it. Therefore a great fear of losing God is a sure sign of a great love to God. And that love will ripen and grow, for God will in-

crease it, and will bestow upon you the gift of fear purified of all doubt and pain. For, as I said in the beginning, the fear of sons springs not from sin, but from the Holy Ghost. It was perfect in the sinless and Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is in the saints of God standing before the throne of God for all eternity. The saints in the heavenly court cast their crowns before the throne of God. They cast themselves down on their faces, and ‘adore Him that sitteth upon the throne.’⁹ And in them is made perfect that profound veneration of the Divine Majesty, that profound sense of dependence upon their Maker and their God, that profound submission of their will to His perfect and eternal will, which is the root and perfection of this holy fear. Therefore, if we attain to eternal life, there will be in us for ever this great gift of the Holy Ghost, which has guided us step by step through this dark and dangerous world into the kingdom of eternal bliss.

⁹ Apocalypse iv. 10.

IX.

THE GIFT OF PIETY.



THE GIFT OF PIETY.

We have received the spirit of sons, whereby we cry Abba, Father.
ROMANS viii. 15.

I HAVE explained before, and I need hardly remind you again, that a gift of the Holy Ghost differs from a grace of the Holy Ghost in this : the graces of the Holy Ghost in the soul are to the gifts what the faculties of sight and hearing are to their special and disciplined perfection. The gifts of the Holy Ghost, therefore, are certain powers by which these graces are brought to maturity. But the gifts become active in proportion to our fidelity in corresponding with the graces of the Holy Spirit. And therefore, though there are fear and piety in every one who is born again, however low we may be in the spiritual life, if only we are in a state of grace, nevertheless the gift of holy fear and the gift of piety are the ripe fruit; the blossom, the perfection and the beauty of the spiritual graces.

We have seen that holy fear consists chiefly in the filial fear of those who, loving God, are afraid of losing Him, and therefore are afraid of offending Him, lest they should lose God in eternity.

But the gift of piety springs in part from holy fear. It is a ripe fruit, which grows out of charity, or the love of God and our neighbour.¹ We commonly understand piety to be our personal religion towards God. This is indeed one sense, but it is only a very narrow sense of the word. The word piety in its original meaning signifies the natural affection which parents have for their children and children for their parents. Even in the lower animals there is a certain love, and care, and nurture in the parent towards its offspring. There is also a certain confidence—and I may say affection—in the offspring towards the parent. This in the rational natures, in the higher creation, becomes an instinct of love with a government of the intelligence, and is what we call natural affection. The natural love of parents for their children, and of children for their parents, is the basis or ground of piety. Now inas-
much as the gift of the love of God and our neigh-

¹ 'Pietas est benignæ mentis dulcedo grata omnibus auxiliatrix infusa affectio divinique cultus religiosa devotio.' Dionys. Carthusian. de donis Spir. Sanct. tract. iii. art. 34. Oper. minor. tom. i. Cologne, 1532.

bour is infused into us by the Holy Spirit of God when we are born again in the supernatural order, so piety, which we have in the order of nature, is elevated, purified, and perfected into the love of God and man. This, then, is the first sense and the outline of piety; but we must go further.

We have already seen how the gift of holy fear is exemplified in the Incarnate Son of God; how in our Divine Lord this gift of holy fear—that is, the filial subjection, dependence, and submission to His Heavenly Father—was in its perfection; and how, even in the blessed in eternity, there will be for ever this gift of holy fear in the reverence, adoration, and worship of the Heavenly Court. In like manner, we shall best understand what is the gift of piety in the example of the Incarnate Son. First of all, love, together with worship, produces adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. And the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which was a human heart like ours, deified by union in His person with the Godhead, had in itself love, worship, adoration, praise, and thanksgiving in the highest and the most perfect measure. God was never worshipped and adored by any human heart from the creation of the world as He was from the first instant of the Incarnation, when the Sacred Heart of Jesus, full and perfect in the first moment of its

existence, adored our Heavenly Father. So, again, the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord, in its relation to His Blessed and Immaculate Mother, had love, reverence, and filial obedience in the utmost perfection. Once more, the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord, in His sympathy with mankind, surrounded as He was by sin, and the sinful, and the miserable, and the widows, and the orphans, and the lepers, and the blind, and the deaf, and the maimed, all the day long, poured out an infinite pity upon them, exhibiting this gift of piety, which means love and pity, love and compassion towards all the creatures of God. In this was the fulfilment of the prophecy in the book of the Prophet Isaias, where, speaking of the Incarnation, he says: ‘There shall come up a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall spring out of his root.’² Now who is that rod but the Son of David, Jesus Christ Himself. And what is this flower but the tenderness and the beauty of the divine and human character of the Incarnate Son of God. We have here, then, the full and perfect idea of what piety is.

I will now go on to trace out what are the objects to which this gift of piety addresses itself; and, perhaps, it is in this way we shall be able to make what I have to say most intelligible and practical.

² Isaias xi. 1.

1. To begin, then, let us take the first and highest object of piety. It is God Himself. We see this gift of piety manifested in its greatest breadth and fulness throughout the history of Israel. The books of the Old Testament tell us how the patriarchs, and prophets, and saints of old walked with God. There may be seen, in the most luminous forms, this gift of piety. Take the prayer of Solomon when he dedicated the Temple; or take the whole book of Psalms, and you will see, from beginning to end, this gift of piety, inspiring, enlarging, and elevating. In the Theism and the Theocracy of Israel we see the gift of piety in its fullest exercise. And that which we see under the veils of the Old Testament we see also in the noonday light of the New. God, Who was known of old as One Who was inscrutable and incomprehensible, Whom no man had seen or could see, is made known to us by visible manifestations in our humanity, and has revealed to us the glory of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The highest object of piety, therefore, is the ever-blessed Trinity. The relation of sons to our Heavenly Father, the relation of brethren to our Lord Jesus Christ, the relation of disciples to the Holy Ghost—all this is contained in the gift of piety. And this supreme adoration of the glory of God in

three Persons fills the whole world, as Malachias prophesied: 'From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles, and an oblation and incense of pure offering shall be offered in My name.'³ And where is the fulfilment of this prophecy to be found? It is the worship of the world-wide Church of God—the supreme and united adoration of the sons of God gathered into the one family of their Heavenly Father—which is the one and only Church of Jesus Christ, our elder brother, Who was made man for us, Who has made us sons of God through His Incarnation. This world-wide adoration of the Church of God glorifies the ever-blessed Trinity through all the hours of the day and through all the watches of the night. When our morning sacrifice is being offered here at the sunrise, the evening sacrifice is being offered in those regions of the world where the sun is setting. The sunrise and the sunset both alike look down upon the lights, and the incense, and the beauty of the Holy Sacrament. Throughout all lands, and people, and tongues, there is a perpetual chain of worship, an unceasing service of God, an endless glorifying of the ever-blessed Trinity, in the oblation of Jesus, the Lamb of God, in the voices of praise

³ Mal. i. 11.

and thanksgiving which the priests of the Church are offering all the day long, in the unseen worship of those in whom the spirit of piety breathes in secret, in the love of those who come up one by one to the House of the Lord and worship Him in spirit and in truth. All this is a perpetual sacrifice, always ascending from the heart of the Church throughout the world, uniting itself with the adoration of the Heavenly Court, and going up before the Throne with the worship of the saints and the piety of the Immaculate Mother of God. Such, then, is the gift of piety in the Catholic Church ; and everything relating to the worship of God, therefore, becomes an object of piety to us. We consecrate the place where we worship God ; we consecrate the altar, and the chalice, and the paten, whereby the sacrifice is offered. The very books that are used in the worship of God are sacred. The man who steals them is guilty of sacrilege ; the man who dishonours them is guilty of impiety. There is a mark upon them all. They belong to the service of God : holiness to the Lord is graven upon them. All the order, and precepts, and prescriptions of worship lay us under obedience. They are the laws and tests of our piety. Therefore this gift of piety pervades the whole Ritual of the Church, and terminates, first and above all, upon

the ever-blessed Trinity, Three Persons in One God. Next after God Himself piety loves and venerates His Word. And the Word of God is twofold—the unwritten and the written, the Faith and the Scriptures. The unwritten Word of God is the perfect revelation of God in Jesus Christ which was given partly by the Son in the days of His humility, and partly by the Holy Ghost upon the day of Pentecost. It was preached by the Apostles in all the world before as yet any word of it was written. There was no New Testament—no written Word of God—when the whole Christian faith was declared and believed throughout the world.

The voice of the Holy Ghost, speaking by the Apostles, filled the whole world; and all the nations were illuminated with the knowledge of the ever-blessed Trinity, and of the mysteries of the Incarnation, and of the Redemption of Jesus Christ. This is the tradition of divine faith written in the world-wide intelligence of the Church by the Spirit of God. And therefore it is that every one who has in him the gift of piety has also an instinctive hatred of heresy. The instinct which detests and recoils from heresy is part of the gift of piety, because piety loves the revealed truth of Jesus Christ. We are thought to be intolerant and bigoted, because we will keep no

peace with heresy. But how can any man love Jesus Christ, and not love every jot and tittle of His truth? And if we love His truth, that which contradicts it must be hateful, for it contradicts Himself. And therefore, though we are to be tolerant towards the persons of heretics, we are intolerant of the heresies themselves. There is no degree of aversion with which we may not lawfully look upon conscious contradiction of any divine truth. There is this distinction between the heretic and the heresy. The heresy we may deal with at once, with all peremptory severity; the heretic we leave to the judgment of God and of the Church. We are not the judges of his guilt, because we cannot read the heart.

Then for the written Word of God. The Catholic Church has, from the beginning, cherished and preserved the Holy Scriptures with the most vigilant and jealous care. It is not permitted to man to alter a jot or a tittle of the Word of God. That written Word is a record of the inspired teaching of the Holy Ghost. And the Catholic Church, therefore, has preserved it as the greatest treasure committed to its charge next after the living tradition of divine faith. The saints of God have manifested their love for it with every token of veneration. Saint Charles never read it except with his head bare, and upon his

knees ; Saint Edmund of Canterbury kissed the page whensoever he opened the book, and kissed it again when he closed it. In this way the saints of the Catholic Church have revered the Holy Scriptures. And yet we are told that the Catholic Church does not honour the Holy Scripture, and does not give it to its people. This is a superstition, and contrary to the truth. The page of Holy Scripture is open to all those who can read and understand it. If the Catholic Church warns those who can neither understand it nor read it that they need the guidance of others, it is out of piety and out of love both for the truth and for souls. It is also because heretics have perverted the meaning of Holy Scripture, and have perverted the version of the text. They have perverted even the writing itself. Therefore the Catholic Church is jealous over the Scriptures ; and that for a most evident reason. Holy Scripture is Holy Scripture only in the right sense of Holy Scripture. Just as a man's will is a man's will no longer if it be misinterpreted by those who come after him. If those who survive him misinterpret the disposition of his property, they defeat his will, they defraud him of his intentions. So it is with the Holy Scriptures when they are misinterpreted—God is defrauded of His Will and Testament, and His people are robbed.

Therefore, the first and highest object of piety is God, His worship and His Word.

2. The next is the same, but in another way. It is still God, but God in another form; it is God Incarnate, Jesus Christ our Lord, God manifest among men, and dwelling among men, visible to faith. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has been, is, and ever will be the object of our most tender, of our most fervent piety. Just as those who were with Him upon earth intensely loved Him, observed His every motion, every expression of His countenance, were guided by His eye, and listened with eagerness to every word He spoke, so it is now. And the Person of Jesus Christ is the loving meditation of the Church. We set before us the life, and the example, and the character, and the Passion of our Divine Lord as the chief object of our piety. Every state He passed through—His infancy, His childhood, His youth, His manhood—all these are objects of our mental prayer. But more than this: His life of sorrows, in every part of it—the Agony in the Garden, the Five Sacred Wounds, the instruments of His Passion, the effusions of His Precious Blood, and, above all, His Sacred Heart, the sanctuary of all love divine and human, the ineffable expression of the tenderness and piety of God towards us, the object of our love and piety towards

Him. And this, not only as He is at the right hand of God, not only as He is in His glory, but as He is in the Blessed Sacrament, fulfilling His words: 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.'⁴ Jesus dwelling on the altar always in the midst of us, in Godhead and manhood, in His divine and perfect personality, is the object of our piety, as truly and as really as He was when the Apostles were round about Him in the guest-chamber at Jerusalem. Jesus always ready to receive us there, offering Himself daily in the Holy Mass, as He offered Himself at His last Paschal Feast; giving Himself to us in the Holy Communion, as He gave His body and His blood to the Apostles on that night before He was betrayed; always there lifting up His hands over us in benediction; ever ready to receive our prayers; listening in silence to all the unuttered confession of our sins and of our sorrows: the same Jesus, God and man, is to us now as He was then, the object of the piety of His disciples, and will be for ever.

And, once more, He is not only with us upon earth and in a visible way in His sacramental presence, but He is present upon earth and in a visible way in His mystical body, which is the Church. The Church of Jesus Christ, Head and members, is the

⁴ S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

mystical person of Jesus Christ. Therefore Saint Augustine says: 'The head in heaven and the body upon earth make up one person; so that the voice of the Church is the voice of its Head.' The promise, 'He that heareth you heareth Me,'⁵ is verified whensoever we hear the living voice of the Church of God; and therefore it is that the Church and its divine voice are alike an object of our piety. This is a thing unintelligible except to those who have the light of the Catholic faith. In England, the greater part of our fellow-countrymen seem to have lost from their intelligence the idea of a visible Church upon earth. They tell us that it is something invisible, something not in this but in the unseen world, something not tangible, something with which we can have no contact. To them, therefore, it is an idea, it is a notion, it is an abstraction—I might therefore say a non-existence. But that which does not exist cannot be an object of piety. Not so the Catholic Church. It is next after God the greatest of all realities. Beside it all other things are light and fleeting as the dust. It is a reality full of life and of intelligence. It is the object of love, fidelity, and service to all its members. When the Church suffers anywhere it is felt everywhere. Every

⁵ S. Luke x. 16.

persecution wounds the whole body; every benediction is a common joy. And in this the words of Saint Paul are fulfilled: that 'we rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep.'⁶ Because we are members one of another, there is a perfect sympathy binding the whole Church together. And for this cause it is that the indignities heaped upon the Vicar of Jesus Christ day by day excite a sense of indignation and call forth a sorrow and a lamentation throughout the whole Catholic world. We feel that in the person of His Vicar the Son of God Himself is insulted. The gift of piety which worships the Master envelops also His Servant. Therefore also it is that when we see the pastors of the Church slandered, fined, and imprisoned, exiled and cast out of home and country, we feel that these outrages are done to our Divine Master, for Whose sake they are suffered. We have with those who suffer these things a living sympathy; the sympathy of piety, that is, of love and reverence. The outrages against their person and their office are committed against us also. Now this is what no man can feel who does not believe that the Church of God is a divine creation. If he believes that the Church is created by a human will or by human legislation, or that it is something

⁶ Rom. xii. 15.

which men have put together of themselves by voluntary association, he may call it the Church of God, but it can never be an object of piety to him. He may have a great self-interest in it, but an object of reverence it cannot be. But they who believe that the Church visible on earth is the mystical body of Christ, ever united by a living union with its Divine Head in heaven, love it for His sake. The Divine Head in heaven is so united to the mystical body upon earth, that He is persecuted when it is persecuted, and He is glorified when it is glorified. Therefore they venerate the body because of the divine glory of its Head.

3. And there is yet another object of this filial piety, namely, His Blessed and Immaculate Mother. Nothing more clearly shows how low the faith of England in the Incarnation has declined than the extinction of the loving veneration which is due to the Mother of Jesus. Is it possible that any man can believe that the Eternal Son of God, co-equal to the Father and the Holy Ghost, assumed our manhood of the substance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in assuming it made that manhood to be the humanity of God, so that she bore into this world an infant whose personality is divine—is it possible, I ask, that any man can really believe this, and not see at once

that she is thereby Mother of God, forasmuch as her child is God? If any man does not believe or does not see this, does he not at once convict himself of either not believing or of not understanding the Incarnation of the Son of God? The one or the other of these things is inevitable. If he believe the Incarnation truly, and as it is revealed, then to him Mary is the Mother of God. If he does not give her that title, then I ask how does he believe that her Son is God? But if he believes this, then, next after her Divine Son, is there any object of piety, that is, of love and veneration, higher than she? Let such a man lay these things to heart. She is the Mother of the Divine Redeemer of the world; she is the Mother of his Divine Lord and Master; she is the Mother of his Divine and perfect Friend; she is the Mother of the Saviour Who shed His precious Blood for him on Calvary—is it possible, I ask, for any man to believe these things, and not at once to regard her, next after her Divine Son, Who is God, with all the piety of his heart? Let him look at the example of Jesus Himself. Next after His Heavenly Father there was no one whom He venerated and loved as He loved and venerated His Blessed Mother. But the example of Jesus Christ is the law of our life. We are bound to imitate it; we are bound to

be like Him. But love and veneration to her are a part of the perfection of Jesus Christ. We cannot be like Him if we are unlike Him in this. He who has not love and veneration to the Blessed Mother of Jesus is unlike our Divine Saviour in that particular perfection of His character which comes next after His filial piety towards God. But, besides all this, love and veneration are due to her for her own sake; because she is the Mother of the Redeemer of mankind; because, above all other creatures, she has been sanctified by the Holy Ghost; and because, in being made the Mother of the Incarnate Son, she is made the Mother of us all. For how are we the sons of God, how is the 'spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry Abba, Father,'⁷ sent forth into our hearts, except through the Incarnation of the Eternal Son? And if His Father becomes our Father through, His Incarnation, how does not His Mother become our Mother too? If by His taking our humanity He makes men to be sons of God, how is it that in taking that humanity He does not likewise make His Mother to be our Mother in grace? Surely it is the incoherence of mind which follows on the loss of the light of faith that makes it possible for men to say and unsay these divine truths in the same

⁷ Rom. viii. 15.

breath. As soon as a man receives into his heart the full light of the Incarnation, two self-evident truths arise upon his reason; the one, the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; the other, the love and veneration of His Blessed Mother. They follow by the necessity of consequence. How can any man fail to see these things? And, what is more, every man that has the love of the Incarnation in him will rejoice to see them.

4. Fourthly, there is another object of piety, which must be taken as one though it is multitudinous, that is, the Communion of Saints. All the friends of God are the objects of piety to those who have piety towards God, by Whom they were made perfect. First, there are the saints of God in the Heavenly Court around His Throne—the multitude that no man can number, of all nations, races, and tongues, in white raiment washed in the blood of the Lamb. All these are reigning with Christ, and intercede for us, and know our needs: not because they can hear, nor because they are omnipresent—for these things are the stupidities of heresy—but because they know, and they know because they are in union with God, and He makes known to them what He wills they should know. Our Lord has said: ‘There shall be joy among the angels of God over one sinner doing

penance.’⁸ How can there be joy if there be not knowledge? He declares that there is knowledge among the angels of God; because He declares that there is joy; and joy over one sinner doing penance. But penance is a silent change of the heart—the secret whispers of sorrow for sin committed, which may never be uttered in articulate and audible words; and these secret and inaudible whispers of the heart are known before the Throne of God. How and why? All things are known to God, and they are known to all to whom God reveals them. It is so that the friends of God round about His Throne know our prayers, and continually pray in our behalf. Whosoever has not piety towards the saints of God; whosoever does not love his guardian angel; whosoever says, ‘What need have I of patron saints?’—such a man has little of the gift of piety. Where there is the spirit of piety, everything which unites us with God will be an object of our love. The saints, by their intercession and their patronage, unite us with God. They watch over us, they pray for us, they obtain graces for us. Our guardian angels are round about us: they watch over and protect us. The man who has not piety enough to ask their prayers must have a heart but little like to the love and vene-

⁸ S. Luke xv. 7.

ration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But there are other friends of God to whom we owe a debt of piety. They are those who are suffering beyond the grave, in the silent kingdom of pain and expiation, in the dark and yet blessed realm of purification, that is to say, the multitudes who pass out of this world, washed in the Precious Blood, perfectly absolved of all guilt of sin, children and friends of God, blessed souls, heirs of the kingdom of heaven, all but saints, nevertheless they are not yet altogether purified for His kingdom. They are there detained—kept back from His presence—until their expiation is accomplished. You and I, and every one of us, will pass through that place of expiation. Neither you nor I are saints, nor upon earth ever will be; therefore before we can see God we must be purified by pain in that silent realm. But those blessed souls are friends of God next after His saints, and in the same order they ought to be an object of our piety, that is, of our love and compassion, of our sympathy and our prayers. They can do nothing now for themselves: they have no longer any sacraments; they do not even pray for themselves. They are so conformed to the will of God, that they suffer there in submission and in silence. They desire nothing except that His will should be accomplished. Therefore it is our

duty to help them—to help them by our prayers, our penances, our mortifications, our alms, by the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar. There may be father and mother, brother and sister, friend and child, whom you have loved as your own life—they may now be there. Have you forgotten them? Have you no pity for them now, no natural piety, no spirit of love for them? Do you forget them all the day long? Dear brethren, those who made your home in your early childhood, the light of whose faces you can still see shining in your memories, and the sweetness of whose voice is still in your ears—do you forget them because they are no longer seen? Is it indeed ‘out of sight out of mind’? What an impiety of heart is this.

The Catholic Church, the true mother of souls, cherishes with loving memory all her departed. Never does a day pass but she prays for them at the altar; never does a year go by that there is not a special commemoration of her children departed on one solemn day, which is neither feast nor fast, but a day of the profoundest piety and of the deepest compassion. Surely, then, if we have the spirit of piety in our hearts, the holy souls will be a special object of our remembrance and our prayers. How many now are there whom we have known in life. There are those who have been grievously

afflicted, and those who have been very sinful, but, through the Precious Blood and a death-bed repentance, have been saved at last. Have you forgotten them? Are you doing nothing for them? There may also be souls there for whom there is no one to pray on earth; there may be souls who are utterly forgotten by their own kindred, outcast from all remembrance, and yet the Precious Blood was shed for their sakes. If no one remembers them now, you, at least, if you have in your hearts the gift of piety, will pray for them.

5. And lastly—for time would fail me if I were to go on—every creature of God ought to be an object of loving piety. Do not imagine, as some do, that when the love of God enters into a man his perfection consists in the hardening of natural affections. Whensoever the spirit of devotion or piety narrows or contracts the heart, and makes our home to be less bright and happy, when it makes parents imperious to children or children undutiful to parents, or lessens the sympathy of brothers and sisters, or chills the warmth of friendship,—whensoever the plea of religion, of greater fervour, of more exact piety, has the effect of lessening the natural affections, be sure that such piety is either perverted or not true. The best son will make the best priest, and the best daughter will make the best nun; that is to say, the best train-

ing for the most perfect character as a disciple or a handmaid of Jesus Christ is to be found in the natural affections of home. And therefore, if you find any faults or defects in your natural affections towards those whom you ought to love, do not make excuses for yourselves, as if the love of God were any palliation or defence. Love to kindred and friends, with all the tenderness due to them, and not only to friends but to your enemies, to those who are displeasing to you, to those who offend you and treat you spitefully—this is the fruit and the proof of true and loving piety.

The theologians of the Church teach that there is no object of our natural affection which is not elevated and perfected by the gift of supernatural piety. They tell us that the two great objects of natural piety upon earth are our kindred and our country. I mention this expressly, because if there be anything with which the world rings all day long it is the foolish imputation that Catholics cannot love their country. It is a part of our Catholic theology that a man is bound by the gift of piety to love his country. And for what reason? Because next after the father and mother that bore him, the land and the people among whom his birth is cast are the objects of his charity. We call the land of our birth our mother

country or our fatherland. Our countrymen are our kindred. Their welfare, their peace, their defence, their prosperity, ought to be an object of our most hearty, resolute, self-denying, and self-sacrificing devotion. We are like men on board ship—all that are together have one common interest, they are all alike in peril or in safety. And therefore our fatherland or our mother country is an object of piety to us. We invest them with the dearest names which are borrowed from the sanctity of domestic life. Do not therefore let anybody imagine that as Catholics you are not loyal, that you are not lovers of your country. Shall I tell you what the secret is? We are not, indeed, such lovers of our country that if an Apostle came to us from Judea, we should stone him with stones, or stop our ears or harden our hearts against him. We do not believe that every teacher sent from God ought to be an Englishman. We do not believe that all matters of spiritual judgment and doctrine are to be decided within the four seas of England. No, because that would be an impiety—an impiety against God, an impiety against Jesus Christ, an impiety against His Church, an impiety against the Holy Ghost, an impiety against the whole revelation of faith, an impiety against the whole Christian world. We know that when the

Apostles were sent out with a divine commission to make disciples of all nations, the nations listened to them, all Jews as they were. They subdued the cultivated Greeks, and the imperial Romans, and our barbarian forefathers into one family. And within the circle of revealed truth, all these national distinctions were abolished. In Christ Jesus there is 'neither Jew nor barbarian, nor bond nor free.'⁹ We are all one in Him. There is one Head and one pastor over all, to whom our Lord said in Peter, 'Feed My sheep, feed My lambs;'¹⁰ and there is one Holy Catholic Church having one faith, one jurisdiction, one power of legislation and of judgment, ruling all the people of God upon earth. To every attempt to set up national authorities and national teachers where the Incarnate Son of God has planted His kingdom, the gift of piety makes us say, 'Take my life if you will, but these human authorities and human teachers I will never obey.' This refusal to obey is founded upon a revealed law. I have told you that father and mother are the object of piety to sons. Love, obedience, and submission are due from the son to his parents, and yet our Divine Lord has said, 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.'¹¹ Therefore he that loves his country, or the laws or the

⁹ Col. iii. 11.¹⁰ S. John xxi. 15.¹¹ S. Matt. x. 37.

traditions of his people, more than the Church of God, or the laws of Jesus Christ, is not worthy of Him. No, the best subjects are those who are first and above all loyal to their Heavenly Master, and to His heavenly kingdom. They will best keep the laws of the land who do it for conscience' sake. Loyalty is a part of our religion; and that not because it is our interest, nor because it chimes in with our opinion. The days in which we live are days of lawlessness and disloyalty; the time is coming when true fealty and true loyalty will be found only in those who are loyal and true, first to a heavenly King, and after this to the representatives of His authority upon earth.

I have now, as far as I could, drawn out before you what is this gift of piety, and what are its objects. You will remember that they are, first, God our Father; next Jesus, our Incarnate Lord, in His Person, in the most Holy Sacrament, and in His Church; then His Blessed and Immaculate Mother; then all His friends reigning with Him, or suffering on their way to His kingdom; lastly, parents, kinsmen, friends and enemies, and our own country—subject always to the law of God.

Now there are two short questions to be asked, and then I have done.

What is it that destroys the piety of men? You answer at once, it is impiety. Just as unbelief destroys faith, and as despair destroys hope, impiety destroys piety. This is plain. But what is impiety? It is a want of faith to believe and a want of love to venerate. How shall a man have piety towards God if he does not believe in Him? How shall a man love God if he does not venerate Him? And how is it that men grow up without believing in God? There are, I believe, a great many men who are without faith in God; not so much through their own fault as through the sin of their parents. I believe that in this country of ours millions and millions are growing up without the knowledge and the love of God. Why? Because three hundred years ago this land was disinherited and robbed by the wickedness of men; the light of the Catholic faith was extinguished. A fragmentary Christianity indeed remained; but the altars were pulled down, and the name of our Blessed Mother was taken away out of the mouths, and at last out of the hearts, of her children. Not so in a country close by us. A narrow channel of sea divides us from a people who speak the same tongue, who are of the same family with us, who are our fellow-countrymen, who are our brothers. There, since Saint Patrick preached, the light of faith

has never been extinguished. Belief in Jesus and the Sacrament of the Altar, love of the Holy Mass, have never failed ; love and piety towards His Blessed and Immaculate Mother has never been chilled. Up on the mountains, out in the morasses, in the cold of winter, in all manner of suffering, the faithful people of Ireland have preserved the tradition of piety, which among us is grown so cold and dim. We can easily understand that millions among us have not the knowledge or the love of God, not so much through their own fault as through the fault of those who have gone before them. And yet there are also multitudes who have it not through their own fault, through their own grievous fault. There are men among us who profess to be infidels, and who glory in their unbelief, who have no shame to say, 'I do not believe in God or in Jesus Christ.' There are men whose intellectual pride cavils and perverts, criticises and distorts, every truth of the revelation of God. What shall we say of them ? That they are impious, and that it is the want of the love of truth which causes this aberration of the human mind when it is once grown to maturity. In childhood the privation of which I spoke will account for much. But when men come to maturity, do you think that God has left the evidence of His revelation so ob-

scure that it cannot be seen? This is to throw the sin of their unbelief on God, and to accuse Him of injustice. The fault by which they do not see Him in the light of His truth is not on God's part, but on theirs. No, dear brethren, there is another reason. One of the chief causes of unbelief in matters of faith is sin, secret and sensual; the sins of the heart, if not of the life. In many a soul impurity is the cause of impiety.

Once more, there is another very dangerous cause of impiety and unbelief: the gross heavy material love of the world, of getting and hoarding, of growing rich, of drowning the soul in things of this world. And there is still another, the direct opposite of this. It is a levity of mind, which is to be found more often among educated than among uneducated people. I thank God that the spirit of mockery which desolated France in the last century, and ran like a wildfire all through the upper classes of that cultivated people, has found no home in England. There were a few, here and there, in the beginning of the last century, who attempted to imitate it, but it soon went out; and it went out just as an evil thing which cannot bear the light of the sun or the pure air of heaven. Thank God that this evil spirit of levity and mockery is not to be found widespread

among us ; it may indeed be found in individuals, but Englishmen are a graver race. Anybody who makes jokes on religion, or who ridicules the faith, or who allows himself to speak with irreverence of God, or of His Blessed Mother, or of the Saints, or of the Holy Catholic Church, thereby blinds his own eyes ; and if there be anybody who from levity will not heed, will not inquire into the truths of faith, will not read, will not examine, will not listen, such a man condemns himself to ignorance, and therefore to unbelief.

I know that worldly and passionate minds, which live in pleasure, become at last so shallow that the thought of God can find no soil in which to root itself. They become utterly light, like the thistledown which is carried to and fro by the faintest breath. The opinions of men, and the fashion of the day, and the pestilence of bad literature which lies on the tables of the educated, are quite enough to keep the revelation of Jesus Christ out of their hearts. They read nothing but fictions and levities, till their very minds become light and false.

How, then, is the spirit of piety to be matured and sustained ? In the outset of this subject, we went back to the Old Testament, and to the examples of the patriarchs, and the prophets, and the

saints of the old law. They were profound believers in God. They were men who lived in the midst of the divine attributes. They were men who walked to and fro among the perfections of God; of His sanctity, of His justice, of His mercy, of His truth, of His purity, like as men walk to and fro upon the high mountains, and in the midst of the splendours of the noonday sun. And this is the meaning of the counsel which God gave to Abraham: 'Walk before Me, and be perfect;' ¹² walk before Me; live in My presence, in the vision of My perfections, and thou shalt be perfect. If only you will try and impress upon yourselves in the morning, and keep continually alive all the day long, the recollection of the Divine Presence; if only you will pray with your heart when you are not able to pray with your lips, —then the spirit of piety which is in you will be perpetually increasing in brightness and in ardour, as the lamp that hangs before the Altar is perpetually replenished with oil by a vigilant hand.

And therefore, to make an end and to sum up what I have said, this gift of piety is a gift which comes from the Holy Ghost. We ought to ask for it day by day. 'Ask, and you shall receive.' ¹³ The promise never fails. And this gift of piety will make the

¹² Gen. xvii. 1.

¹³ S. Matt. vii. 7.

service of God sweet to you, prayer will be sweet to you, the Holy Sacraments will be sweet to you, and the Holy Mass, and visits to our Divine Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; all these things, of which the world is weary, to you will be a sweetness from the presence of God. You will then understand the Psalmist's words: 'One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek for, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to visit His temple; for in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His tabernacle, He shall hide me in the secret of His tabernacle, and shall set me up upon the rock.'¹⁴ If this be the reward of piety here, while we are wayfarers on earth, what will be its reward when we shall see God face to face?

¹⁴ Ps. xxvi. 4-6.

X.

THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE.



THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE.

Labour as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 2 TIM. ii. 3.

THE third and last of the three gifts of the Holy Ghost which perfect the will is the gift of fortitude.

We have already drawn, at least in outline, what is the gift of holy fear, and have seen that it is a filial fear of losing God, a fear of sin, and a fear of the occasions of sin, because it is by sin and by its occasions that we may fall from God. Likewise we have drawn out what is the gift of piety. We have seen that it is a filial piety, that is, the love of sons, together with a veneration which springs from love, and the obedience which springs from that love and veneration.

And now, thirdly, the gift of fortitude or strength, of courage, of force, of endurance, is necessary to perfect the will. For if the will be soft, shrinking, inconstant, and cowardly, it can never hold out under suffering. The words of the Apostle, 'Labour like a

good soldier,' may be also translated 'Endure hardness;' that is, bear pain, rise up against difficulty, accept crosses, suffering, privation, hardship, whatsoever may come in the way of duty. Fortitude, therefore, is of two kinds: there is an active fortitude and a passive fortitude. The gift of fortitude is what we commonly call courage. We see it in perfection in the soldier saints of the Old Testament, in Josue, in Gedeon, in David, in the Maccabees. They were what the world calls heroes, what the Church calls saints. And in all the history of the Church there is a multitude of soldiers and warriors who have led armies, and endured all hardships, dangers, and wounds, and, at the same time, have walked with God in purity, and humility, and charity. This is the active fortitude, but it is not the perfection of fortitude. The perfection of fortitude is in its passive character. It is to be seen in the life and Passion of our Blessed Lord. The Son of God, Who never lifted His hand but in benediction, nor stretched it out but to be nailed to the Cross, is the perfect pattern of fortitude. In Him fortitude and courage were made perfect. There was never fortitude like His in the thirty-three years of His mental sorrow in the midst of this sinful and dying world. There was never fortitude to be compared to His submission in the agony of Geth-

semani ; never courage comparable to His endurance in that long night of pain before His crucifixion ; never was there patience in man comparable to His in the three hours of anguish on the Cross. The courage which shows itself in action may be little more than the energies of nature, and nature has a certain satisfaction in putting out its latent power ; but the fortitude which is shown in suffering is, I may say, contrary to nature. All our nature rises against it, and it demands an energy of will, of self-constraint, of self-subjugation, which is altogether not of nature but of grace. Therefore, as I have said, fortitude is necessary to perfect the will. It is necessary also to perfect the holy fear of which I spoke, and even the piety of sons ; and for this reason. Fear without fortitude degenerates into timidity and cowardice. Piety without austerity—and austerity is a part of fortitude—degenerates into emotion, excitement, and weakness. And therefore, to sustain and perfect holy fear and filial piety, fortitude is vitally necessary, because it gives to the character strength, force, endurance, courage, and perseverance.

Active fortitude is one of the four cardinal virtues, and belongs to the order of nature. But the fortitude of which we are speaking is a gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now before we go further let us clearly understand what are the four cardinal virtues. We ought to understand what they are, and why there are four, and not more than four. A little reflection and it will stand to reason. The four cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance. They are the excellences of the soul, and are related to the reason, the will, and the passions. Prudence is the excellence of the reason, and justice is the excellence of the will in action; fortitude is the excellence of the will enduring pain, and temperance is the excellence of the will in controlling the passion for pleasure. Therefore these four cardinal virtues are founded in the nature of the soul itself. They mutually perfect each other. Fortitude is necessary to perfect prudence, justice, and temperance; and fortitude is the excellence of the will by which the other cardinal virtues are matured and made perfect. For example: a man ought to be ready to endure, to suffer, to lose or to sacrifice everything, rather than act contrary to prudence; because in acting contrary to prudence he is acting contrary to reason, and reason includes the conscience. He ought also in like manner to be ready to suffer or endure anything rather than act contrary to justice, for justice is the duty which we owe to our neighbour. And, further, we ought to be

ready to endure anything rather than to act contrary to the equities which we owe to our neighbour—that is, to the finer and more delicate duties of justice—where our own interests draw us the other way. Once more, a man ought to be prepared to suffer anything rather than indulge his love of pleasure so as to soften, to debase, to imbrute himself; that is to say, it is fortitude which perfects temperance. Fortitude therefore belongs, as a cardinal virtue, to the excellence of man in the order of nature; but it is not to be found in its perfection without the assistance of grace.

The gift of fortitude is not only what I have described; it is the ripeness and the supernatural perfection of that which begins in nature. It is, therefore, to be defined in this way. Fortitude is a gift of the Holy Ghost, strengthening the soul against pain and fear, and supporting the soul in fulfilling every duty, not according to the light of nature only, nor only according to the Ten Commandments, but according to all the higher works of perfection which come from the gift of counsel.¹

¹ 'Fortitudo est habitus supernaturalis atque infusus, secundum principia fidei divinæque legis agens et patiens.' Dionys. Carthusian. de donis Spir. Sanct. tract. iii. art. 16. Oper. minor. tom. i. Cologne, 1532.

There are five chief times in which, unless we exercise the gift of fortitude, we shall be in the danger of losing God and eternal life. We will take these five as examples ; for they will contain everything else.

1. The first great peril by which the perseverance of the soul in grace is threatened is the time of temptation. Just as in the time of battle a soldier needs courage, so it is in that moment that a Christian man needs the gift of fortitude. Courage does not consist in underrating danger, or despising the powers of the enemy. Those that despise their adversaries are almost always defeated. True courage looks danger in the face, measures its full stature, and without fear goes out to meet it. So it is with spiritual temptation. We are all surrounded by it ; we all carry it within us. And a man that does not know that he is surrounded by temptation, and that he has it within him, is like a man who is walking unconsciously into the midst of fire. We have every one of us personal temptations of various kinds. We have our circumstantial temptations attaching to our lot in life ; we have our private and domestic temptations in every path of duty. And unless we have fortitude to overcome these temptations, they will overcome us ; one or the other is inevitable. If we

have not courage and strength to bruise them under our feet, they will in the end bruise us under their power. Our character is the result of this conflict. And therefore the gift of fortitude, first of all, is to measure the whole of our danger; to realise the presence of the tempter; to know him to be a fallen angel, excellent in strength, surpassing in intelligence, of supernatural craft and subtilty, and of a diabolical malice. He is not an enemy to despise, he is not an enemy to undervalue. Cowards laugh at danger in order to get up their courage or to conceal their fear; brave men are silent and look danger in the face. The gift of fortitude, in making us look at the strength and subtilty of the tempter, makes us to mistrust our own strength. It will make us to know the meaning of these words: 'He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall;' and while it inspires us with a great mistrust of our own power, it fills us with a great confidence in the presence and the protection of God. Though our eyes are not open to see the mountain full of the chariots of fire, as the prophet saw when he opened the eyes of his servant, yet we know this: that round about every faithful son of our Heavenly Father there are the twelve legions of angels, which the Son of God in His Passion would not call to His

own aid. The gift of fortitude, therefore, springs from a confidence in God, from a knowledge that God is round about us. Whatever our temptation may be, if it comes upon us in the unrelenting violence of sorrow after sorrow, assault after assault, as it did of old upon Job, who was stripped of his children and of all that he had, smitten from head to foot with sore disease, separated from men, sitting upon his dunghill, upbraided by all who knew him, reproached even by his friends: still in the midst of all temptation he had confidence, not in himself, but in God; like him, we may say: 'Though He kill me, yet will I trust in Him.'² Patience overcame, and in the end he was sevenfold rewarded. Saint Paul, as he tells us, had a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, lest he should be exalted by the spiritual favours he had received; and in the conflict of that temptation he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him; but the answer came, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'³ His cry was not heard, nor was his prayer granted; and yet it was more than answered, for the grace of God was perfected in his weakness. So it will be with your temptations. If you walk in the furnace like the three faithful sons of Israel, there is a fourth ever with you, and He is

² Job xiii. 15.³ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

the Son of God. To you the words of the prophet will be fulfilled: 'When thou shalt pass through the waters, I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not cover thee; when thou shalt walk in the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames burn in thee.'⁴

2. Now another time of need is mortification of self. A saint has said, 'If I had one foot in heaven, and should leave off to mortify myself, I should be lost.' We shall never see the kingdom of heaven if we do not mortify ourselves. Our whole salvation is made up of these two things—mortification and sanctification; that is, the slaying of the old man that is within us, and the perpetual renewing of the soul by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. But our sanctification is exactly in the measure of our mortification. Like as the thermometer tells the measure of heat or cold, so our sanctification goes onward or backward, just in proportion as we mortify ourselves. Our tempers, our passions, our inward temptations, our pride and vanity, the self-love, and the jealousies, and the multitude of inward faults of which we are conscious, will master us little by little unless we master them. Why, then, is it we see so few people persevering in anything like a life of solid piety? I

⁴ Isaias xliii. 2.

will tell you at once. It is from their want of fortitude in mortifying their faults. It is their softness which makes them give up denying themselves; and from that softness come inconstancy, wavering, hesitation, a slackened step, and at last a looking back; and 'he that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.'⁵ We live in soft days. Who is there now that fasts? Fasting means taking no food until sunset. We have introduced I know not what relaxations; and our Holy Mother the Church, because she is benign with a maternal pity upon the culpable weakness of her children, rather than try them too sharply, gives them all manner of indulgence. Why, to this very day the people of Israel, three times in the year, in great solemnity, taste no food from the sunrise to the sunset—a bitter and sharp rebuke to us, the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. We are told that 'My physician says I cannot fast.' Let me ask you; do you believe it when you hear your neighbour say so? I know you believe it when you say so of yourselves. Why is it we are so ready to believe what the physician says? Suppose he were to say to us, 'You must give up this or that pleasure.' We should not do it. But if he says, 'You must

⁵ S. Luke ix. 62.

give up going so often to Mass; or going out so early in the morning; you cannot fast,' we believe him on the spot, as if he were an evangelist. Why is this? Because of our softness. Shame upon us. However, it is not only about fasting; but we cannot even abstain. No, not even on a Friday. No, not one day in the week. To go without meat for one day is dangerous to our health; it makes us ill; it pulls us down. Why, half the human race never touch meat. Are we not made up of the same dust of the earth? It is the corrupt civilisation from which we are sprung which has so unnerved our whole being, that we cannot go without meat one day in the seven. Now ask yourselves: do you believe these valetudinarian superstitions? You are prevailed upon, I have no doubt, by the trust you have in your physician, and you readily give way. But would you give way so readily if you had the gift of fortitude in you? Would you be so ready to say, 'I know that the Church commands it; I know that the saints have practised it; I know that the greater the saints the severer their fasting; I know that every book I read enjoins it; I know it will be good for me if I do it'? And why then cannot you do it? If I can touch or trouble some of your consciences, I shall not regret it. I feel confident of this: that we have entered

into a period of softness, in which the laws of the Church and their sweet severity are being stealthily obliterated from the hearts of men.

I will go further. Who is there now that has the courage to live the life of the saints? We read their lives, and admire them. The austerities they practised in secret; the means they took to subdue their faults; the offerings of self-denial which they made to their Divine Master, no one knowing it but He only; the poverty in which they voluntarily lived; the raiment they wore, which, in its fashion and in its quality, bespoke a willing poverty like His own—all these things we commend and shrink from. Let us try ourselves a little. Are you willing to be tested? Should you be willing to go out on a bright summer's day, at noon, into the midst of one of our thronging streets dressed in a threadbare coat? Are you courageous enough to say grace at a dinner party? Would you be willing to go to confession in the sight of your Protestant friends? Dear brethren, I am afraid that we are such cowards—we stand in such fear of the world—that we dare not live a life of poverty with any outward token of it, or face the ridicule of practising our faith openly. If we have faith and piety, we conceal it. It is a good thing indeed to conceal it out of humility; and to pass it unnoticed

lest we should be singular, lest we should be tempted to vain-glory: that is not what I am speaking of. But if we deny ourselves, and give our money to the poor; if we stint what we lay out on ourselves, and then are willing to bear the outward marks of poverty, not through any affected singularity, but because it comes by necessity of our state—then we have at least some measure of fortitude. But if we have not fortitude enough even for this, for what shall we be courageous? We are all striving to be dressed in the fashion of the day, so that the world may count us to be its own, and then we call ourselves Christians. I might go on; but this is more than enough on the subject of mortification, though I have more to speak of. Let what I have said suffice: only remember the words of the Apostle, ‘I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection.’ And why? ‘Lest after I have preached the Gospel to others I myself should become a castaway.’⁶ Such are the words of an Apostle, converted by a miracle, who had seen the Son of God in His glory. Even he feared lest if he should cease to chastise his body and bring it into subjection, after having preached the Gospel to others, and saved souls without number, he himself should be cast out from the face of God.

⁶ 1 Cor. ix. 27.

3. And then, once more. What do the words of our Lord mean? 'Marvel not, My brethren, if the world hate you.'⁷ You know it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, and I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you;⁸ and 'You shall be hated of all men for My name's sake.'⁹ Again, the Holy Ghost says: 'The friendship of this world is the enemy of God.'¹⁰ Now I wish you to ask yourselves some questions. Does the world hate you? Have you ever had any sensible token of its hatred? What mark has it ever set upon you of hating you for the name of Jesus? Are you conscious of this hatred? If not, hear these words of God once more: 'All that will live goodly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.'¹¹ When did you ever suffer persecution? Dear brethren, I will not say you—I will say when did we ever suffer persecution? And therefore, unless we have the enmity of the world against us, we certainly have no sign that the gift of fortitude is in us. Now how does the world show its hatred of us? First, by all manner of false accusation. How did it treat our Master? It called Him gluttonous, and a wine-

⁷ 1 S. John iii. 13.⁸ Ib. xv. 18.⁹ S. Matt. xxiv. 9.¹⁰ S. James iv. 4.¹¹ 2 Tim. iii. 12.

bibber,¹² and a friend of publicans and sinners. 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,'¹³ meaning to say He is one of them. Have they ever said anything of this kind of you? Again, Saint Athanasius, the saint of dogma, the witness of the Holy Trinity, the great doctor of the Incarnation, for fifty long years was cast out, persecuted, hunted to and fro; and for what? For the truth of the co-equality of the Son with the Father—for the truth of the Incarnation of the Word made flesh. Now I ask you, dear brethren, have you ever suffered anything for the truth's sake? And if you were to be tried, if you were to be threatened, if you were to be in danger of losing a situation, a place of trust, a place of lucrative employment, would you stand firm? There have been saints who have been accused of all manner of evil, being all the while innocent as the driven snow; for instance, Saint Vincent of Paul, Saint Francis of Sales. Why were they accused? Because the world hated them. And why did it hate them? Because of their sanctity. Have you ever tasted of false accusation? And if you were to taste it, what would you do? Would you not go up and down, trying to defend yourself? Would you not seek everywhere for proofs to refute the accusation? What did they do? They

¹² S. Matt. xi. 19.¹³ S. Luke xv. 2.

never opened their lips. They committed their cause to the judgment of God, and waited until He made their innocence as clear as the light, and their justice as the noonday. The world singles out the best of our Master's servants for its special hatred. If you were to ask the world 'Why?' it could not say; and in that it fulfils the words of prophecy: 'They hated Me without cause.'¹⁴ As they did with our Lord, so they do with His servants. 'If they have called the good man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household. The disciple is not above his Lord, nor the servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be as his master.'¹⁵ Shall I give you one more example? Is there anybody on the face of the earth who is accused, hated, cast out, the butt of the slings and stones, the insults and the contumelies, the violence and the warfare, of the world, like Pius IX.? See that old man, more than eighty years of age, who for seven-and-twenty years has stood, with the calm inflexibility of an apostle, with the silent fortitude of his Master, against every kind of treason, ingratitude, betrayal, revolution, the forsaking of friends, the triumph of enemies. If there can be found in the world an example of one who seems to be utterly baffled, beaten, and cast down, it is

¹⁴ S. John xv. 25.¹⁵ S. Matt. x. 24, 25.

Pius IX. Everything he possessed is torn from him; the city which was his own sacrilegiously usurped; everything that was sacred about it profaned; and, with the keen irony of those who know how to add insult to injury, laws of guarantees passed for the protection of his sovereign person,—I do not think that upon the face of the earth there is any man whom the world regards as so complete a failure as Pius IX. And there he is, in the sight of the nations, like a man that is dumb, and cannot open his mouth. What fortitude is required for all this. That fortitude has been tempted to compromises, as our Lord was tempted with the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, and he spurned them from him. He has been tempted by menace and by threat, which involved the peril of his own life, and he has shown that the Vicar of Jesus Christ, if need be, is ready to die. Everything that could be used to bring down his great constancy has been tried; but the gift of fortitude is too strong, and he is victorious. There was a correspondence the other day between the weakest man, the most isolated on the face of the earth, and the mightiest sovereign of the hour among men—one who wields powers greater than any other earthly potentate. Were ever weakness and strength matched

face to face in a more unequal conflict? Wait for the end. The whole history of Christianity is but a successive repetition of what we see before us, until it runs up into the great Martyrdom—the Son of God dying on the Cross, isolated, cast out, forsaken, defeated, baffled, the greatest failure, as the world would say, the false prophet and the foolish teacher caught at last and hung up high on Calvary between two thieves. The proof that out of divine weakness has come the kingdom of God, through the fortitude of Jesus, is the Christian world. As it was then, so it shall be now. What seems to be failing in the sight of men goes forth conquering and to conquer in the patience of the Church.

4. And once more. Let us come nearer home. Our Divine Lord said: ‘He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.’¹⁶ And when a man came to Him and said: ‘Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest, but suffer me first to go and bury my father;’¹⁷ that is to say, ‘Let me go home to my father’s house, and while he lives let me tarry with him: when I have laid him in the grave I will come and follow Thee,’—our Divine Lord, pitiful as He was, said: ‘Let the dead bury their dead; come thou, and follow Me;’¹⁸ that is to

¹⁶ S. Matt. x. 37.

¹⁷ Ib. viii. 21.

¹⁸ Ib. 22.

say, between us and the service of Jesus Christ nothing must come. If He call upon us to make sacrifice of everything in life, that sacrifice must be made. The Apostles made it, the disciples made it, the first Christians made it. Saint Paul was held in honour, trust, and public repute; he cast all these things from him because he had seen Jesus of Nazareth. All those who became disciples of the Son of God in Jerusalem, one by one were cast off by country and by friends; and accounted as dead; but they were willing to lose all things because they knew the words of their Master: 'Whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple,'¹⁹ and 'He that will save his life shall lose it, for he that shall lose his life for My sake shall save it.'²⁰ So it was in the early times and in imperial Rome with the sons and daughters of patrician families, and with the members of the senate who became Christians. They were out-cast, despised, condemned, counted with the slaves, and the Jews, and the grave-diggers, and the refuse of the people; all the world turned in anger against them, and they were cast off by all who loved them the day before. And have not these same things happened nearer home? In my own experience, I have known men who had all things at their foot—

¹⁹ S. Luke xiv. 27.

²⁰ Ib. ix. 24.

the world and its honours, and its power, and its possessions—and in a moment, when the eye of the Son of God looked upon them, and the gaze of that Countenance pierced their hearts, they gladly cast everything behind them for the sake of truth, for the love of the kingdom of God, for the salvation of their own souls. Nothing of this world could hold them back. Father, mother, kindred, home, possessions—all were nothing. Why? Because the light of faith was in them; because holy fear taught them that except they were faithful they might lose God for ever; and because filial piety taught them that unless they had a generous self-sacrificing love for the Master Who gave Himself for them, they might lose Him in the day of His coming. The gift of fortitude filled them with the courage and endurance of soldiers to endure whatever they had to suffer. Ay, but it is not only men who have so endured. We have known young girls, the delicate daughters of luxurious houses, reared and cultured in all manner of softness—we have known them rise up with the courage of confessors for the faith. For the sake of Jesus Christ they have given up everything of this world. The bright, sweet, luring visions of the future, all that hovers before the thought of those who are entering, in the innocence of life, on the path

that leads onward—to home, or wealth, or happiness—all these things they forsook. And why? Because they had come to know this: that the Good Shepherd has on earth one fold and no other, and that the voice of His Church on earth is His own voice—the accents of it to the ear are human speech, but the truth that is spoken is the truth of the Son of God. The Son of God, Who speaks by the voice of His Church, was calling them to Himself. And they promptly answered, ‘Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth;’²¹ ‘Lord, my heart is ready.’²² And they gave themselves to Him with the courage of confessors, and I may say with the strength of martyrs. What enabled them to do this? It was the gift of the Holy Ghost; the gift of fortitude.

5. And lastly. We do not live in an age of martyrdom; but we live in an age when every man must bear a martyr’s will. Now at the moment I am speaking there are bishops of the Church of God fined, threatened with imprisonment, imprisoned and threatened with deposition, and under sentence of pretended deposition. Be it so. Do you think that one such pastor, who has received his consecration from the Son of God, and who, through the Vicar of Jesus Christ, has received the charge of his flock,

²¹ 1 Kings iii. 9

²² Ps. lvi. 8.

with the words, 'Feed My sheep,'²³ that one such man will be found who will lay down his pastoral staff at the foot of an imperial throne? Wait till we see it: then we will believe it. The whole history of the Church gives the lie to such a slander against the fortitude of the bishops of the Catholic Church. But the man who will prove this must carry the will of a martyr in his heart, for who knows what may be before him? Now, as we are taught, there are three kinds of martyrs. There are those who are martyrs both in will and in deed, like the Apostles, all except one; next, there are those that are martyrs in will but not in deed, like Saint John—he alone among them died a natural death; thirdly, there are those who are martyrs in deed if you like, but not in will, for they die out of the Church, out of the faith. To what do they bear witness? Saint Cyprian says of such in his day: 'They are slain but not crowned—*Occisi sed non coronati.*' Now every man must at least bear in his heart the will of Saint John; he may never be called upon to lay down his life, but he must have the will to do it, if he were ever called to bear witness to the faith or to the unity of the Church, or to its divine authority, or to his own pastoral office. Then he must have the will to suffer all things: fines, exile, or im-

²³ S. John xxi. 17.

prisonment, violence *usque ad sanguinis effusionem*—even unto blood. And so, dear brethren, it must be with you. For there are three kinds of martyrdoms, as there are three kinds of martyrs. First of all, there is the martyrdom of those who are slain by the sword; secondly, there is the martyrdom of those who willingly give their lives, if need be, in the care of the sick and dying, and in the fever hospital, or in times of pestilence. Theirs is a martyr's will and a martyr's death. The poor priest, the Sisters of Charity and of Mercy, and the like, and many a noble generous heart, are in more peril in the fever hospital than on the battlefield; and yet some have been struck even there in their Master's work, and have given up their life in the midst of the wounded and the dying. And, lastly, there is the martyrdom of those who wear themselves out early and late, summer and winter, in weariness and poverty, by broken rest at night, never-ending work by day, in the service of their neighbour, and in the love of the souls for whom Jesus shed His Precious Blood. Such men have fortitude enough to care for nothing, if they may finish their course with joy; and when kind, but not wise, friends tell them that they ought to spare themselves, they remember what their Master said to Peter. Now you may all have that spirit in

you. You may all have a ready will to lay down your life by the bedside of the sick. The poor nuns, the poor priests—whom the world despises and hates—live all day long in that readiness to die for their neighbour's good. It is in our own lifetime—only the other day, I may say—that a bishop and twenty-seven of our priests gladly gave their lives, struck down by fever, in the towns and cities of the north of England. They came up one by one, each filling the place of the other; as when a soldier is struck down a man from the rear comes to the front, so they died with the fortitude of martyrs.

Now, dear brethren, the great example of this spirit of fortitude, as I have already said, is Jesus Himself. And He has been followed from the beginning by a line of martyrs. The martyrs of early days you all know. The line has never been broken, though at times the world has ceased for a while to persecute. Now fortitude is tried even more in the foresight of the suffering that is to come than in the actual presence of death. Our great Saint Thomas of Canterbury knew for five years that he would have to lay down his life for the liberties of the Church, and, with that perfect knowledge before him, he inflexibly persevered, and even returned from safety in exile to his martyrdom at Canterbury. Sir Thomas

More, the greatest of English laymen, as Saint Thomas of Canterbury was the greatest of English pastors, knew long before that his fate was sealed. He foresaw that he would be called upon to deny the supreme and divine authority of the Church of God, and to choose between the divine jurisdiction of the Vicar of Jesus Christ and the usurpation of a royal master. And when called on to give his answer, he gave it with fortitude and with joy. On the morning of his first examination at Lambeth he had confessed his sins and received absolution, and the Precious Body and Blood of His Divine Master, to strengthen him for the trial. And as he came back to Chelsea in his boat upon the Thames, there was a radiant joy upon his face. Those that were with him asked why he was so glad. He answered, 'Because I have gone so far now that my weakness can no longer tempt me to go back.' In this, too, he was like his glorious predecessor Saint Thomas, who some hours before he suffered, being asked why he was so merry, answered, 'A man must be merry who is going to his Master.' We need go no further than our own land, and almost our own times, for heroic examples of the gift of fortitude. They are to be found now at this day in the missionaries of the Catholic Church. While we in our every-day life here are reading of

martyrs in antiquity, we forget that there are martyrs at this moment in the East, in Corea, and in China. If you will read a book called *The new Glories of the Catholic Church*, you might believe yourselves to be reading the acts of the martyrs of the first ages. And these martyrdoms have been taking place now, while we have been living our commonplace life of the nineteenth century here in London. I will give you one example. A man and a boy, both converts to Christianity, natives of Corea, were seized and brought before the tribunal; the man was a catechist, the boy was a catechumen, only just baptised. The man, in terror, renounced his faith, and the boy, bound to the stake, and scourged until the blood burst from him, and the flesh was cut from his bones, stood firm. Reproaching the man, he said to him, 'You are a man and I a poor boy; you ought to have strengthened me, and I, a poor boy, reproach you for your apostasy.' Then taking a remnant of his own torn flesh, in indignation, he cast it at the apostate. These are things of our own day, hardly twenty years ago. And from whence come these glories of the faith? From the cardinal virtue of fortitude raised and perfected by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now let me sum up what I have said.

We have seen, as you remember, that there are three gifts which perfect the will, and four which perfect the intellect. We have finished the first part of our subject, superficially I know, but as far as time would allow.

You have seen, in the five examples I have given, that it is this gift of fortitude which sustains us in temptation, which supports us in mortifying ourselves, which enables us to bear the warfare of the world, which inspires us with a generous inflexibility, so as to make us account all things as dross and loss for the sake of Christ. And, lastly, if need be, it inspires us with the will to lay down even life itself for the sake of our Divine Master. Our subject, then, so far, in outline is complete.

All I would say to you in conclusion is this. Ask for the fortitude to choose the love of God above all things. Say to yourselves, 'No, not the world; nor the things I love best; nor the love of kindred; nor the friends dearest to me; no, neither shame, or contempt, nor the mockery of the world, shall stand between me and the faith of Jesus Christ.' Choose God above all things. If you will do this, you will then understand the meaning of the words, 'Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake.' In choosing God you will break with the

world, and, what is more, the world will break with you. But the world can do you no harm. The world cannot hurt you, except in one way; that is, if it can get you to love it. So long as you do not love the world, the world has no power to harm you. If it leave the mark of its hatred upon you, bless God for it. Thousands and tens of thousands have died in sight of the one Church, but out of its unity, for fear of the world.

Now the marks of true fortitude are these. They are the very marks which were seen on Jesus Himself. First of all, when He was falsely accused, when He was bound with cords, when He was condemned, He held His peace; there were no revilings, no reproaches, no contention. He committed Himself to God, Who judgeth justly and knows all things. So the prophet said of Him, 'As a sheep before the shearers is dumb, He opened not His mouth.' And, lastly, rejoice if you share His spirit; for if you have His patience, be sure that every wound, every sorrow, every stigma, inflicted upon you for His sake, will be not only healed but rewarded. Every wound will be glorified, and every sorrow will increase your eternal joy. If, then, you have the gift of fortitude, persevere to the end. To you these words are spoken: 'He that sat upon

the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write, for these words are most faithful and true. I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth will I give of the fountain of the waters of life freely;²⁴ and 'To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne; as I also have overcome, and am set down with My Father in His throne.'²⁵

²⁴ Apoc. xx. 5, 6.

²⁵ Ib. iii. 21.

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XI.

THE GIFT OF SCIENCE.



THE GIFT OF SCIENCE.

I account all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. PHIL. iii. 8.

WE have already considered the three gifts of the Holy Ghost which perfect the will; namely, holy fear, piety, and fortitude. Holy fear is the beginning of the obedience of the children of God; piety is the filial affection of the sons of God; and fortitude makes the good soldiers of Jesus Christ. There yet remain the other four to be treated; and they are those which perfect the intellect or the reason. Now as the reason has a twofold operation—that is to say, either pure speculation or contemplation of abstract truth, or practical judgment respecting truth and falsehood, and right and wrong, as they bear upon our conduct—so these four gifts are distinguished into the two that perfect the speculative intellect—namely, the gift of intellect, or understanding, and the gift of wisdom; and the two which perfect the prac-

tical intellect—namely, the gift of science or knowledge and the gift of counsel. Inasmuch as the practical intellect is the most widely diffused among men—indeed, those who have little or no power of speculation in them have often a very prompt and unerring guidance in the practical intellect—it is clear that this operation of the reason is the first and the most important to the greater part of men. We will, therefore, begin with the two gifts which perfect the practical intellect, and with that which is the first in order ; namely, the gift of science.

Now you all understand that the word ‘science,’ in Latin, is simply knowledge, though it has acquired a more technical and exact meaning. The word ‘knowledge,’ in our language, is so wide, so general, and so vague, that it does not suffice to convey the meaning of the gift of science. This gift of science is something between the exact and the wider sense. It is neither the vague knowledge which we commonly understand by the word, which may mean the knowing of any particular thing or of all things, neither does it mean technically and exactly a scientific knowledge, because many things are not capable of it.

I can readily understand that you will think this to be a matter both abstract and speculative, and

therefore remote from practice. But I hope I shall be able to show it is not remote from practice, but that it is highly and immediately practical, and that it closely touches the conscience and the responsibility of every one of us. Though I do not deny that a multitude of sins come from passion, or from weakness, or from malice, which is the corruption of the will, nevertheless it is most certain that the greater part of the sins committed on the face of the earth come from the perversion of the intellect, which is the corruption and darkness of the reason; and that if we would heal our own souls, we must begin by rectifying the false action and the perversion of our intellect. There is in every one of us a perversion of the reason, at least in some matters; in many it spreads widely over their intellect, in all it is to be found in some measure. The reason in man is like a lens through which we can discern minutely both truth and falsehood; but if there be a flaw in the lens, be it never so small, every object we see through it will be in some measure distorted. So it is with the intellect. The reason or intellect in us is that part of the soul which is nearest to God. The Son of God became man by assuming a reasonable nature: when He took upon Himself a created nature He did not take it from the irrational creatures, He took it from

the reasonable creation. And the order of the Incarnation was this : He took a human body by assuming a human soul, and He assumed a human soul by uniting His eternal intelligence with a created intelligence ; so that the human reason is that part of our nature which is in the most immediate contact with God, and the reason which is in us is therefore in a special way the image of God. It is the light of God in the soul, whereby we are able to know God and ourselves, and to judge of truth and falsehood, and of right and wrong. The conscience is only the reason judging of right and wrong in matters of practice, as the speculative intellect is the reason judging of truth and falsehood in abstract truth. And so long as the reason that is in us is conformed to the intelligence of God—that is, to the truth and to the will of God, which is the law of God—in that measure we are like to God, and walk in His light. Our nature is thereby rectified, and restored from the corruption and the distortion of the fall. But just in proportion as the reason that is in us is darkened or perverted, just in that measure we depart from God, just in that measure we become deformed and the image of God in us is obscured. Sin consists in a conscious transgression of the law with the eyes of our reason open. But the distinction between right

and wrong is discerned by the intellect. Is not this a practical subject? Can there be anything more practical? Is it not the purging and the cleansing of the eye of the soul, and therefore of the conscience, which is the light of God in us?

There is another reason why I have chosen this subject. If there be one thing in this nineteenth century of which men are proud, with an arrogant self-gratulation, it is the intellectual illumination of the days in which we live; and if there be anything which more than another is making havoc, like a devouring pestilence, in the whole Christian world, it is what we call intellectual pride. Let us, therefore, bring this intellectual progress to the test. Let us see what it is. Let us see what men have to be proud of. This, I think, will result from what I am about to say.

Now there have been three periods of the world. A period before the revelation of Christianity was given, during which the reason of man was left unaided, except by the lights of nature and the inscrutable communications of God, of which we cannot now stay to speak. What was the state of the world when the intellect and the reason of man was left to its own light? Read over the first chapter of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans. I need not enter

into any detail. The utter and universal perversion of the intellect of those who first multiplied gods, and then worshipped the creature more than the Creator, and the consequent moral corruption of the heart in those who, being intellectually perverted, could hardly discern right from wrong, is a picture so horrible, that I have no will to dwell upon it. Secondly, the reason of man under the light of revelation has been rectified and conformed to the intelligence and to the will of God in this, that God has made both known to us by the declaration of His truth and of His law; and the Christian world, so far as it is worthy of the name, has been conformed to the truth and the law of God. The intellect of the Christian world has been thereby illuminated and sanctified. And when the intellect or reason of man is illuminated and sanctified, it carries the light of truth before the will in the path of obedience, and guides it in the way of conformity to God; as the Psalmist says: 'Thy word is a light unto my feet.' Such was once the state of the Christian world, and such it is still, wherever faith reigns over the hearts of men. God sustains and preserves His Church by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the Fountain of all illumination and of all grace, in its conformity with His own divine intelligence. He guides the Catholic Church in the

path of His eternal truth. That which we call infallibility is nothing but this: the Church cannot err from the path of revealed truth. And they who are faithful to the Church are illuminated and sanctified, even in the midst of the darkness and the distortion of this nineteenth century.

What is the intellectual state of the men who have revolted from the Church, who have fallen away from it, who have set themselves up on the outside to be its critics, its judges, and its teachers? What is the condition of those nations that have broken away from the unity of the faith and of the Church of God? We see a country which, intoxicated with an excess of material power, is now daring, as a precursor to its own chastisement, to persecute the Church of Jesus Christ. A fatal extinction of supernatural light, the aberrations of false philosophy, the inflation of false science, the pride of unbelief, and a contemptuous scorn of those who believe, are preparing Germany for an overthrow or for suicide. The intellect of man in revolting from God falls from God, and, falling from God, loses its own perfection; it thereby darkens itself, and, having lost the light and the knowledge of God, loses also the knowledge of His law. Saint Paul says of such: 'Their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be

wise, they became fools.' The intellectual results of this we see in the philosophies of the Absolute and the Unknowable, of independent morality, of universal scepticism, and the denial of all that is not subject to sense. And this is 'culture;' and its professors and disciples are 'men of culture,' the lights of the world, who from their intellectual heights look down upon the nations, and pity men. To us simple mortals it seems as if these intellectual Titans were truncated men, walking about headless and unconscious of their mutilation. To us they seem to be intellectual pollards: stunted trees walking. They have abdicated the elevation and the dignity of the human reason in rejecting the knowledge of God, and in rejecting God they have rejected their own highest perfection. Such must be the condition of the world after it has departed from faith, and of the intellect and reason of man when the light which conforms it to God has departed. It is, therefore, most practical and opportune that we should consider in what way the reason in man may be sanctified. If the intellect of man degrades itself when it falls into darkness, it rises again to its perfection when it is once more sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God. And this is the office of the gift of science.

First, then we will examine what this science is;

next, what is its action upon the reason or the intelligence; what is its intrinsic nature; and then what the subject-matter of it is.¹

1. Now what is it? There are in all men two lights; there is the light of nature and the light of faith. The light of nature, or what we call the natural light of reason; the light of faith, which is the supernatural light of the Holy Ghost. The light of nature is in every man by his birth as man. This is 'the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' But the light of faith is given to those who are 'born again of water and of the Holy Ghost.' And yet the gift of science is not in all those who have been born again. It was in every one of them when they were baptised; it is in every one of you now if you are faithful. It is not in any one of you if you have fallen from your baptismal

¹ 'Donum scientiæ lumen est rationis ostendens atque erudiens quid de rebus creatis sentire oportet secundum divinæ legis seu fidei documenta. Et iste est primus ejus intimusque effectus, rationem taliter informare: potissime tamen docet hominem seipsum veraciter considerare, præsertim per operationem ad virtutes ac vitia, an scilicet bonus an pravus existat, an conscientia sibi bonum testimonium præbeat, an opus Dei negligenter persolvat. Secundus doni hujus effectus est, quod facit abstinere a malis, id est, in medio nationis pravæ atque perversæ laudabiliter conversari. . . . Tertius effectus est temporalium rerum administratio recta et efficax. Quartus est compendiosiore et efficaciore proficiendi viam et summam in cunctis agendis discretionem ostendere.' Dionysii Carth. Opp. min. tom. i. tract. iii. art. xxv. p. 127.

grace; unless, indeed, you have been restored to grace by absolution. Faith is a special superadded light, which takes up into itself the natural light of reason. The light of faith remains even in those who are in mortal sin. But the gift of science is something over and above both reason and faith, superadded by a special action of the Holy Ghost to those that are faithful to grace. When the light of nature has been trained and matured, we call it prudence. It is prudence which perfects the natural reason.

The gift of science is confined to those who still abide in communion with God and in the grace of sanctification; because it is not only light, it is also love; it is not only the light by which we know the truth, but it is also the love of truth. Therefore Saint Paul says of the Jews, and of other unbelievers who rejected the Gospel, that they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved: for that cause God suffered them 'to believe a lie.' This gift of science, then, is a certain love of truth, and with that love comes a facility to discern and to act upon truth. Science is based on the cardinal virtue of prudence, which perfects the reason, and is elevated by faith, which illuminates the reason. Science therefore includes prudence and faith, and superadds

a special perfection. Such is precisely the description of this gift of science. It discerns a sweetness in the truth of God and in the law of God. This, then, is its nature.

2. Now what is the effect of this gift upon the reason of man? It gives to the intellect a certain quality akin to the truth itself. Just as light and heat are akin to each other, and as heat and fire are also akin to each other, just as some materials have a ready affinity with others—some kindle, as the touchwood, some absolutely refuse the fire, as the cold stone—so the reason that has in it the light of faith and the love of the truth, by this gift of the Holy Ghost becomes, as it were, akin to the word of God. It gives a predisposition to see and love the truth. And, again, as when two flames are brought into the neighbourhood of each other they draw to each other, and mingle and become one flame, so the reason or the intelligence, illuminated by the light of faith, and with an instinct of love, unites itself to the truths of revelation. It has a certain kindred nature whereby the reason is conformed to the mind. Now no man is more incapable of understanding the revelation of God than a man whose intellect is falsified by the habit of perverseness, such as insincerity and lying. Moral obliquities bring on a crookedness which

hinders the faculty of discerning the rectitude of God's truth and the perfections of God's law. Again, a man that is sensual and impure blinds his moral sight. The law of God in its purity and unspotted sanctity is to such a man incomprehensible. A man who is unjust has something in him which rises up against the justice of God: he cannot understand the counsels of God because his moral nature is depraved, and his moral nature is depraved because his intellect has a flaw in the lens. But when the reason is conformed to the light and the law of God, then he can discern the truth of God with a facility which no sensual man can possess. Saint Paul says, 'All things are clean to the clean, but to them that are defiled, and to unbelievers, nothing is clean; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.'²

3. Thirdly, what is the subject-matter of science? I cannot better express it than by saying that the main object of the practical intellect is the Divine law and the Divine Lawgiver. But these words contain much. To know the Divine Lawgiver is to know God in His perfections; to know the Divine law is to know the will and the mind of God. And they who have this light in them have a discernment that reaches over all truth natural and revealed; as, for

² Titus i. 13.

example, let me take it in the articles of our faith. The theologians of the Church so treat the articles of our baptismal Creed as to expand them into volumes of theology. That is a speculative action. But the little child that hears me now repeats this baptismal Creed and understands the articles contained in it better than the 'men of culture' who have rejected both the Lawgiver and the law. Our Divine Lord said: 'I confess to Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto little ones: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.' Now let me take another example. The 'men of culture' of this day tell us that the existence of the physical world does not prove the existence of a Creator; that is to say, that the argument has no force of conviction for them. By whose fault? When a blind man looks me in the face and says, 'I cannot see you,' am I therefore not there? And yet the 'men of culture' of these times can look upon the face of the visible world, in which the creatures of God are like the ladder in the patriarch's vision. The Divine Presence was at the head of it, and the angels ascended and descended upon it. So is it with the creation and its works. They are a scale of ascent whereby we pass from the inorganic to

the organic, from the organic to the animate, from the animate to the rational, and from the rational to the spiritual; ascending by a continuous and unbroken chain whereby we reach to the Cause of all. The existence of the world demands the existence of a Maker; for 'every house is built by some man, but He that created all things is God.'³ The physical sciences are the only sciences that men of culture will recognise as worthy of the name. But what are they? They are like the foundation-stones of an arch, upon which stone upon stone is laid; the piers rise until the arch begins to spring; and the arch is not perfected in the beauty of its form and the solidity of its strength until the keystone is let in to tie it all together. What is the keystone of all knowledge? It is theology, the science of God. When the natural sciences, physical and moral, are read in the light of God, they form one perfect whole. All is order and symmetry, and beauty and light. Such is the house that Wisdom has built for herself. By this gift of science, all things are seen in the light of God, and God is seen in all things. By one act of the reason all is seen at once, just as the visible world is seen in the light of the sun, and the light of the sun is seen in everything. Wheresoever the eye falls

³ Heb. iii. 4.

there is still the sun. Such is the subject-matter of the gift of science.

4. But once more. This intellectual light shows us not only what things we ought to believe, but what things we ought to do. They that have this light in them know how to interpret the commandments of God, not only in the letter, but in the spirit—not only in the outward circumstances, which many seem to confuse with the law itself, but in the substance and intent. The Pharisees, for lack of this gift, gave tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, and neglected the greater things of the law. It is precisely this discernment in moral and spiritual things which results from the gift of science. By it we discern between commandments and counsels, and between the way of obedience and the way of perfection. It is science that teaches us our relation to God and our relation to our neighbour. It is this that explains to us the meaning of the words: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ Have you ever reflected upon these words? How are you to love your neighbour as yourselves? You are to love yourselves, then? But self-love is the root of all sin; and yet there is a rational self-love which is a duty towards God. The suicide does not know the value of his own soul. He does not love himself; and he casts his life back in

the face of his Maker, because he does not believe either in his Maker, or in his own eternity, or in his own responsibility. Therefore a rational love of self is our first duty next after the love of God; and the rational love of our neighbour springs from it. Now perhaps, if you will ponder on this, you will have to acknowledge that you have not as yet ascertained what is that rational love of yourselves. No man that neglects the Holy Sacraments can really know the value of his own soul. He therefore cannot have a rational love of himself. No man who treats the subject of religion with levity can have a rational love of himself. If he had he would not so lightly offend God.

Once more. What is it that teaches us to know our own soul—to discern the conscious acts, which are the inward facts, of our spiritual being? What is it that enables us to know our own sins of commission as they really are in the sight of God? It is this gift of knowledge turned in upon ourselves. How do we know our sins of omission but by knowing the law and the Lawgiver? And how do we come to know our temptations—those that are universal to all men, and those that are special to our peculiar character—but by the spiritual discernment of this gift of knowledge? And, once more, how do we

know the value of the graces that are round about us but by this same gift? How do we come to know these graces as the means to our final end, which is God? How do we come to know how precious and how vital they are to us? The greater part of men live in the midst of the graces of God without change, and therefore become insensible. They lose their liberty to creatures; they sell their independence, and perhaps lose their souls, for a momentary success, for the flattery of the world, for the passing sound of money. Remember what the Apostle says: 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'⁴ And again he says: 'They that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition; for the desire of money is the root of all evils, which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows.'⁵ Such men are living for little else than to be rich. In their thoughts the world is first, and God is second. Even good people justify a worldly life by saying that they must lay up for the future. They must create an inheritance for their children: they

⁴ 1 S. John ii. 15.⁵ 1 S. Tim. vi. 9, 10.

must raise them in the world. Such people are lacking in the light of discernment, which tells the real worth of creatures. For of what worth are all the creatures of this world? In themselves they are worth nothing. But as means to the end for which we came into the world, which is a holy death, they are of great worth. Even the best, and the purest, and the most perfect of creatures will not stand these three following tests. Is there a creature of God, however pure and perfect it may be, that is commensurate with the needs of the human soul? Every created thing is too small, and the human soul is too large to be filled or satisfied. Next, is there any creature, however perfect in itself, that can give perfection to our nature? The Creator alone can make us perfect. Lastly, if any creature were in itself commensurate, and had in itself the power to make perfect our nature, would it be eternal? but nothing save that which is eternal can satisfy the soul in man. Now this discernment shows us why it is that so great a multitude of even good Christians are perpetually making gross mistakes; and even saints have been deceived by false judgments, and have been led astray and, it may be for along time, kept in bondage until this gift of science has rectified their discernment, and set them free.

Let us here sum up what is the nature of this gift. It is a special grace of the Holy Ghost superadded to the light of faith, but given only to those who live faithfully in a state of grace, enabling them with a greater facility to discern the truth and the law of God—or, to put it in one word, it is Christian common sense. Christian common sense means the prudence of the light of nature ripened into supernatural prudence, made perfect and elevated by the light of the Holy Ghost.

And now I have only two questions to ask.

1. Why is it that so many people manifest no spark of this light? what is it that destroys this gift which they have in them by Baptism? A mortal sin extinguishes it. By one mortal sin sanctifying grace and the love of God are lost; and with the love of God are lost this gift and all the seven gifts. But I trust we are not in that perilous and miserable state. And yet in us, too, this Christian common sense—this light of the knowledge of our duty to God, and to our neighbour, and to ourselves—may be very faint and low. And what is it that clouds it? The venial sins that we commit so easily—sins of worldliness, sins of self-indulgence, sins of temper, sins of jealousy, sins of pride, sins of vain-glory, sins of sloth, and the like; wherever there is any sin, but, above all,

wherever there is any tampering with unbelief, wherever there is any parleying with the spirit of doubt, wherever the intellect which is in you is exposed by your own free will to the perversions of falsehood. In this nineteenth century they assail us on every side. We breathe an atmosphere charged with uncertainty and doubt. The literature which lies upon our tables—the books we take up every day of our lives—are replete with denials of the law and of the Lawgiver. Curiosity and recklessness fascinate thousands to their fall. The want or the loss of the gift of science, which as a sensitive instinct turns away from error as you would turn away from evil, causes even good minds to go astray. Sometimes they lose the delicate perception of what is true and the delicate horror of what is false. Take care, then, of what books you read, of what friends you make, of what conversations you indulge in, of everything that can cloud the light and discernment of faith that is within you. And, once more—I grieve to say it—in characters that are pure, in characters that are not without piety, there is to be found often a vein of levity—a levity which hinders the appreciation of the true value of things. The man that found the pearl of great price knew its value: he could appreciate it. He sold all for it with a resolute will. But there

are some who live so carelessly that they cannot tell a true pearl from a counterfeit—they cannot tell gold from glittering tinsel. Light minds are shallow : what is real, severe, and true passes them unperceived. From levity comes also irreverence—a light and jesting spirit which is seldom grave, even about religious truth. This often opens the door to sceptical doubt. There are some among us who, if they had been upon the mountain, in the presence of the burning bush, would have drawn near to it with their heads covered and their shoes upon their feet. If they had seen the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves in the wilderness, they would have carried away some of the fragments that remained to subject them to chemical analysis. This is an odious spirit wafted from the world, and making havoc even among those that know better—laying waste many a heart and many a home.

2. My other question is this : How is this gift, if it be in us, to be ripened and perfected ? First, and above all, by prayer. Prayer is speaking with God, speaking face to face with the Giver of all good gifts. ‘Ask, and you shall receive.’ ‘If any man shall ask the Father anything in My name, it shall be given to him.’ ‘If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth liberally.’⁶ When I say prayer, I do not

⁶ S. James i.

mean the reading of prayers out of your book. Vocal prayer is a good thing, and enough for those that can do nothing else. But when I say prayer, I mean the use of your intellect, and of your heart, and of your will in mental prayer, by which you ascend to God and unite yourselves with Him. And the other means is diligent and accurate study. And by study I do not mean the study of metaphysics, or the study of history, or the study even of theology—I do not mean the study of a multitude of books. I will only bid you to study three books, and they will last your life. The first book is God. Look up into the face of God. Live in the light of His presence. Walk to and fro in your daily life amidst the perfections of God, of His justice, of His sanctity, of His purity, of His truth, of His mercy, of His beauty, until, by walking in the midst of that light, you receive some of its brightness and read all things by its clearness. The next book is Jesus Himself. This is what Saint Paul meant when he said, ‘I account all things to be loss for the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.’ He meant that he set before himself the life of his Master, that he read beneath the outward life and entered into the mind of Jesus Christ, that he made the Sacred Heart of Jesus to be the manual of his contemplation. And the third and last book is

your own self. When you have the light of God and the vision of the perfections of Jesus Christ in your intellect, then look into your own hearts. See what is your own state, and shape, and colour in the sight of God. The study of these three books will light up in you a threefold science: the science of God, the science of Jesus, and the science of self-knowledge. Saint Paul says there is a 'science that puffeth up.' It is the intellect of man without God. All its operations are selfish, and its fruit is vain-glory. There never was a century from the beginning when this intellectual pride and the puffing-up of false science were more conspicuous than in this. Let us take an example. The old world, before the reason of man came under the dominion of revelation, was so full of the thought of God, so penetrated with the consciousness of God's presence, that it not only believed in one supreme God, but it multiplied on every side the presence of divine persons, and thereby made to itself a multitude of gods. It was so profoundly impressed by this theism, that so far from refusing to believe in the existence of God, it invested everything on every side with divine personalities. What does the nineteenth century do? It has produced the greatest intellectual monster which the world has ever seen—an atheist, a man who denies

the existence of God. And why does he deny His existence? Because he has no perception of purity, of sanctity, of justice, of mercy, of truth—that is, of the moral perfections which constitute the character of the law as the transcript of the Lawgiver. But this is too large a subject, and I must make an end—all that I have said may be put in one word.

There is a science of God, and it is the gift of God. Do not say ‘this science of God is too hard for me.’ Ask for it, and it shall be given to you. The most perfect act of the human reason, its highest development, its ripest maturity, is to believe in a Divine Teacher. They that submit themselves to the Catholic Church, because they believe it to be infallible by the perpetual presence and assistance of the Holy Ghost, therein put forth the highest act of the human reason. By submitting themselves to a Teacher that is divine, they recognise the dependence of the finite on the infinite intellect. Next, the noblest act of the human heart is to give that knowledge of God to those who have been robbed of it, to those who have been born in the twilight, as the multitudes of our land have been. ‘Freely you have received, freely give.’ Nothing can be compared to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Give it freely. Spread abroad this knowledge by word and deed;

spread it right and left. Break the Bread you have received to all who stand in need of it. 'Cast your bread upon the water, and you shall find it after many days.'⁷ 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening hold not thy hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper.'⁸ You shall find it in the great harvest-home upon the eternal hills. 'They that are learned [that is, with the science of God and of salvation] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that have instructed many unto justice as the stars to all eternity.'⁹

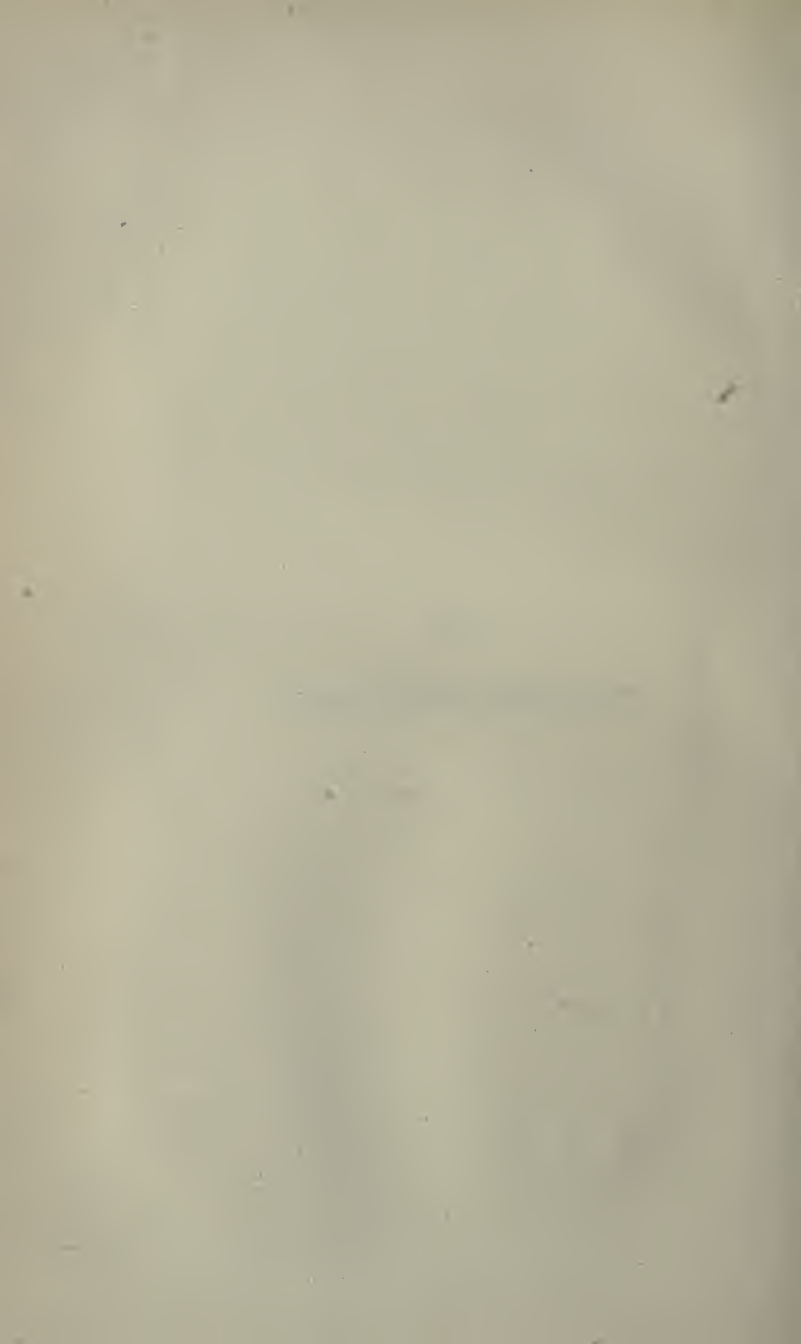
⁷ Eccles. xi. 1.

⁸ Ib. 6.

⁹ Dan. xii. 2.

XII.

THE GIFT OF COUNSEL.



THE GIFT OF COUNSEL.

Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water, and the wise man will draw it out. PROVERBS xx. 5.

THE meaning of these words is plain, and needs no explanation. Counsel—that is, the advice of wisdom—is like the waters of a deep well lying in the heart of a man; and a wise man, who knows his need of counsel, will draw it out. He will ask for guidance; and the man of counsel will draw it from the depth of his own heart.

I have already touched very shortly on that which is the characteristic mark of these latter days; I mean the perversion of the intellect. The intellect of man is withdrawing itself from the light of faith, and therefore from conformity to God. And this intellectual perversion is the source of a systematic immorality in men, in households, and in states. The intellect in man is the image of God in us. It is the light of the soul; and if that light be dark-

ened, how great is the darkness. If that light be clouded, how deep and deceitful is the twilight in which men walk. As I have already said, a flaw in a lens will distort all objects that are seen through it. The intellect perverted in any way distorts principles, judgments, and laws. And twenty errors in practice are as nothing compared with one error in principle. Twenty errors in practice may be corrected, and the twenty-first may never be committed; but one erroneous principle is like a damaged wheel in a machine. It can never work correctly afterwards. One speculative error will produce an infinite series of practical errors. The series is inexhaustible, until the machine itself is either amended or destroyed. We see at this day the revival of Gnosticism. In the first age of Christianity, the Oriental mind, inflated with a belief in its own knowledge, refused to learn of a Divine Teacher. It spun for itself visions, superstitions, genealogies without end, respecting the nature of God and the nature of man. We have it before us at this day in the illuminism of those who refuse any light or teacher but their own judgment; who proclaim that the reason in man is all-sufficing for his own guidance. The first consequence of this is, that they apply their reason as the test of everything they are to believe; next, as

the measure of that which is credible; and thirdly, they make their reason the source of all their faith. And what is that faith? The credulity of unbelief; the rejection of the revelation of God. Such is Rationalism. There has sprung up in the midst of all this rankness a school of men who tell us that the Absolute is unknowable, and that we can therefore know nothing about God. They say that they do not deny the existence of God, because they know nothing about Him. But if we know nothing about God, we can know nothing about His law. As I have said, if we reject the Lawgiver, at the same time we reject the law. And if we know nothing about the law of God, what can we know about right and wrong? what can we know about morality? And therefore, if we know nothing of God, we know nothing of morality. God and the moral law come and go together. Such is the condition of a large number of highly-cultivated men in most countries of Europe at this day. This strange state of privation, happily, is not so rankly produced amongst ourselves as in the older race, to which we bear a certain kindred; but even among us there are too many. Now what is the cause of this strange unbelief? The cause of it is simply the rejection of the principle of faith, that is, of submission to a Di-

vine Teacher ; and a rejection therefore of revelation, which comes from a Divine Teacher ; the erecting of human reason in the place of that Divine Teacher. The intellect of man becomes thereby a god to itself. It is the primeval lie : ‘ Ye shall be as gods.’¹ The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially those of them that make perfect the intellect, form a subject very timely and very wholesome for us ; for the sanctification of the intellect is the only direct and adequate cure for the intellectual and philosophical evils of our time. What, then, is the sanctification of the intellect ? It is the illumination of the reason of man by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God ; it is the submission of the intellect of man to the authority of a Divine Teacher ; it is the conformity of the reason, and therefore of the conscience, of man to the truth and to the law of God. We have already spoken of the gift of knowledge ; we will now go on to the gift of counsel.

If the subject be abstract or dry, the fault, no doubt, will be chiefly mine ; but it lies also in the nature of the subject itself. But if you will patiently weigh the importance of these gifts, you will not mind the dryness of the subject. Everybody I suppose, knows the difference between a prudent

¹ Gen. iii. 5.

man and a wise man. The prudent man is a man who gives good and safe advice. We call such a practical man, but we do not therefore call him a wise man. Sometimes a wise man, in comparison with a prudent man, will be thought very rash, and perhaps very unreasonable. For example, why was it that our Lord, when He was speaking to the people of Capharnaum, and teaching them the great mystery of the Body and Blood which He would give for the life of the world,—why was it that He did not enter into a full explanation of the mystery? Why did He not tell them exactly, and in particular and point by point, anticipating their objections, and interpreting all their doubts? We know that He did not do so, and that it was the counsel of Divine Wisdom which restrained Him from doing so. Again, when He stood before King Herod, who for a long time had desired to see Him, and to see some miracle wrought by Him, why did He not then work a miracle? Once more, when He stood before Pilate, and was falsely accused, why did He not open His mouth? Surely we have here an example of Divine Wisdom acting in a manner which, in the eyes of the prudent men of the world, would be thought rash, imprudent, and unreasonable. Let me give another example, closer to these times. Suppose any man to

do what Saint Charles Borromeo did—sell the whole of his patrimony, and distribute it all in one day to the poor. The world would certainly call him a fool. The prudent men of this world would have thought him mad. The political economist would have said that he committed a double evil: that his profuse almsgiving only promoted indolence and beggary, and that stripping himself of all things was a signal improvidence. Well, then, let me ask you, What is the difference between prudence and wisdom? It is this: prudence is the light which guides us in the natural order and by the lights of nature. The heathen and the philosopher possessed it, and often in a high degree of perfection. But wisdom is something above this; and a wise man will often do and often say things which, in the opinion of the world, are extreme, extravagant, visionary, and impracticable; and why? Because he is acting by a higher light, and in a higher sphere, and for a higher end. Prudence, which belongs to the natural order of this world, aims at two things: it aims at conduct which shall be irreproachable in the eyes of men, and at a certain happiness which shall be so attained. But what does wisdom aim at? Wisdom aims at conformity to the perfections of God; at a state which is supernatural and eternal; at an end which

is above this earth; at a bliss which the world can neither give nor understand; 'for eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for those that love Him.'² Therefore this gift of counsel includes all natural prudence, as the greater includes the less. Be sure of this: that no man guided by the spirit of counsel will ever do an act or speak a word that is really imprudent. All natural prudence is included in the more perfect. All those lights of faith whereby we know God, and ourselves, and the world, and the law of God—all those lights of faith, each and all of them, are included in the gift of counsel. So also is charity, or the love of God and our neighbour, which, as we have seen, is included in the gift of knowledge or science, whereby we see God in everything, and everything in the light of God. This, as we saw, is the nature of science or knowledge, like as we see all things in the light of the sun, and the sun itself reflected in every visible thing. But science, too, is contained in the gift of counsel, and therefore all that is contained in science.

I. What, then, is this gift? It is a certain quality or perfection³ infused into the reason of man by the

² 1 Cor. ii. 9.

³ 'Consilium est habitus supernaturalis a Spiritu Sancto infusus,

grace of the Holy Ghost, whereby the reason is made able to discern not only right and wrong, nor only the way of obedience, but also the way of perfection; that is, to know that which, between two things both good and right, is better, higher, and more pleasing in the sight of God. It gives also, together with that discernment, a certain promptness and facility; that is, a ready will to do and to carry out into practice that which we see to be the higher and better part. You know well the difference between the life of commandments and the life of counsels. The life of commandments is that which binds all Christians in virtue of their Baptism; they are all bound to obey the law of God, the six precepts of the Church, and the like. But the life of counsels—that is, the life of poverty, the life of chastity, the life of obedience, which is the life of the priesthood and the life of those who enter into convents, is not an obligation upon everybody, but a free act of those who choose it, because they are called to it.

There is therefore a difference between the subject-matter of prudence and the subject-matter of coun-

quo in operationibus humanis movemur secundum consilium Spiritus Sancti id est secundum directionem ejus qua nostra consilia dirigit, vel certe vicissim præveniendò inspirat. Dionys. Carthusian. Opp. min. tom. i. tract. iii. art. 4. p. 121.

sel. The subject-matter of prudence is the necessary obedience to which we are all bound. Prudence commands us with an imperial voice to obey the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church. But the gift of counsel moves, invites, and draws the heart to go beyond that which is literally necessary, to do that which is called a work of supererogation; that is, we go over and beyond that to which we are bound. I will give an example. You are all bound to give alms; but Saint Charles Borromeo, as I have said, gave the whole of his patrimony. This was what we call an act of supererogation; it went beyond the literal duty of giving alms. So, I may say, all are bound to live a life which is spotless before God; but all are not bound to choose a life of separation from home and kindred, and from all things that are dear to them.

The subject-matter of the counsels therefore is, first of all, those actions which are free, which we are not bound to do by the law of commandments, but which we freely do out of the motive of glorifying God, of sanctifying ourselves, and of making our perseverance sure. The subject-matter of counsel also is that more perfect way of serving God in things that are lawful; the doing the better of two things both of which are good; the choosing that

which is the higher when we may lawfully choose that which is of a lower aim ; and also the choosing things that are hard and difficult to be done : as when our Divine Lord called His Apostles to follow Him, or as when He said to the young man, ‘ Go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor.’ These were counsels of perfection, of higher and harder things than were required from all men by common obligation. Such, then, is the nature of this gift of counsel. Now let us see its application.

II. The first effect of it on the heart, I will say of a man of the world, is to turn him to God. How many times have you heard a voice in your heart saying to you, ‘ If I live on as I am living now, shall I make a good end ? I desire to die the death of the just ; but have I begun to live the life of the just ?’ Our Lord has said, ‘ Behold, I stand at the gate and knock.’⁴ Have I yet opened to Him ? There has been a hand knocking at the door of your heart all your life long. He has been calling you to turn from sin. He has been saying continually in a clearer voice, ‘ The wages of sin is death,’⁵ and ‘ The soul that sinneth it shall die.’⁶ These two voices have come upon your heart many and many a time in youth and manhood, by day and by night. And

⁴ Apoc. iii. 20.⁵ Rom. vi. 23.⁶ Ezechiel xviii. 4.

they are the voice of the Holy Ghost, the voice of the Counsellor. They have been the gift of counsel itself striving with you, calling you to turn away from the sin of which you are conscious. Again, a voice has come to you and has said, 'The friendship of this world is enmity with God.'⁷ 'Love not the world, nor the things of the world.'⁸ If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' But if the love of the Father is not in him, how shall he dwell in the kingdom of the Father for all eternity? The voice of counsel has been pleading with you to give up the world. Again, there has come a voice saying, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'⁹ Therefore, if I do not know the truth, how am I in the way? and if I am not in the way, how shall I enter into life? For the Son of God has said, 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.'¹⁰ And if I am not in the way, I shall not enter through the gate. He has said, 'I am the door; if any man by Me shall enter in he shall be saved;'¹¹ meaning, 'and no other shall be.' Have I, then, the truth? Do I know the revelation of God? And do I believe, and can I say to myself I know the whole truth as it is in Jesus, and as it was revealed on the day of Pente-

⁷ S. James iv. 4.⁸ 1 S. John ii. 15.⁹ S. John xiv. 6.¹⁰ Ib.¹¹ Ib. x. 9.

cost—every doctrine, every commandment, and every counsel? How can any man say this, unless he can also say, ‘I know the whole truth of Jesus Christ, because I have it from the same Divine Voice which revealed it on that day’? The voice of counsel in this land of England is speaking in a multitude of hearts conscious of their uncertainty, conscious of their twilight, conscious of their doubts, and is saying, ‘Turn to Me while there is time.’ Every truth that God has revealed has an authority and a jurisdiction over the soul of man as soon as it is seen. Every truth, as it becomes known to us, lays an obligation upon our conscience. The man that comes to the knowledge of any truth, and fails to obey it, is resisting the Holy Ghost. ‘Resistance of the known truth’ is one of the six sins against the Holy Ghost. Every truth, then, as it becomes known to us, every light as it ascends up above the horizon of our knowledge, until the whole vision, like the firmament at night, is filled with stars, binds our conscience. When our intellect sees the illumination of the doctrines of faith, every several doctrine, one by one, lays its jurisdiction over us. We are bound from that moment to believe it, bound under pain of eternal death. Such is the voice of counsel. If you were about to pass a river, and you saw before you a

bridge the soundness of which was doubtful, even if you were not sure that it would bear you, would you venture to tread it? Unless you were perfectly certain that the bridge would carry your weight, would you set your foot upon it? It would be a rash act; contrary to wise counsel. So the hope that you have of salvation. Unless you build it on a divine certainty, founded upon the authority of a Divine Teacher, how can you be sure what to believe? Human teachers who may err and perish, contradictory teachers who efface one another, teachers who change from year to year, will not bear up the weight of your soul in the hour of death. Nothing but the authority of a Divine Teacher Who never changes, the Spirit of Truth, will suffice in that day. Unless you are, then, assured that you are resting for your salvation upon an authority which cannot deceive, you are not listening to the voice of counsel which speaks in your heart. This, then, is the first work of this gift.

There is another. When you have listened to that voice, and have found the truth, and have submitted yourself to the Divine Teacher, the work is not done; there is more to do. Every soul has two conversions: the first, to the truth and to penance; and the second, to a higher life and to perfection; that is, it is not enough for you simply to know the truth,

and to obey it in the things that are necessary—you must go further. The Apostle says, ‘All things to me are lawful, but all things are not expedient.’¹² How often have we read these words, and how little have we realised their searching force. My Christian liberty allows me to do a multitude of things; but I know well that, through my fault, many of those things are not safe or good for me. Therefore they are not expedient, and therefore I will give them up. Let us get out of our minds, once for all, the notion that it is enough for us just to keep out of mortal sin. There are many who seem to think that if they can just escape committing grievous sin they have done enough. There are some who defend this doctrine as Christian liberty. When the Apostle said, ‘All things to me are lawful, but all things edify not,’¹³ he raised a higher standard. He was not content with just keeping out of mortal sin. He would have all men go onward to perfection. To be perfect may be the attainment of few, but it is the calling of all Christians. I have therefore told you to apply this principle to your pleasures, and to your amusements, and to your expenditure, and to the use of your time, and to all the habits of your life, which, though they may be in themselves lawful, are cer-

¹² 1 Cor. vi. 12.¹³ Ib. x. 23.

tainly not all expedient, and certainly do not edify. The Apostle says more than this; he says, 'If my meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more meat for ever;' ¹⁴ that is, if anything in my life or in my example—innocent though it may be, and lawful though it may be for me to do—shall encourage or embolden any other incautiously to do the same things, and thereby to run into the occasions of sin, and from the occasions of sin into temptation, and through temptation into the commission of sin, I will deny myself, and I will never again as long as I live use the liberty which, though safe to me, is to others dangerous. Let me give to parents one example. If you have sons or daughters who, in the amusements of life, run into excitement and excess, set them in yourselves the example of self-restraint, and deny yourselves in lawful things. Your example will either open their eyes, or will blind them to their dangers. The severest and most rigorous counsel that was ever spoken came not from the pen of an Apostle, but from the lips of the pitiful Son of God. He says to us, 'If thy eye scandalise thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire.' If thy hand

¹⁴ 1 Cor. viii. 13.

scandalise thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire.’¹⁵ That is to say, nothing, however precious, however intimately identified with ourselves, if it be in any way an occasion of offending God, is to be retained. We ought of our own will to reject it. These are counsels; they are not commandments; they are left to the free will of those who desire to be perfect in God’s service.

III. Lastly, there is a law of liberty. Saint James writes: ‘So speak ye and so do as being to be judged by the law of liberty.’¹⁶ What is this law of liberty? If it be liberty, how are we bound? if it be a law, how are we free? It is precisely the law of counsels. If we love God and our Divine Redeemer; if we hunger and thirst after justice; if we would make sure of eternal life; if we know the will of God, and ‘This is the will of God,’ your sanctification;’¹⁷ if we desire to be sanctified, if we desire to be conformed to the likeness of our Divine Lord and His Immaculate Mother,—then the gift of counsel and the prompting of generous love will make us press onward and rise higher in the spiritual life. Read the Sermon on the Mount: ‘If

¹⁵ S. Mark ix. 46, 42.

¹⁶ S. James ii. 12.

¹⁷ 1 Thess. iv. 3.

any man smite thee on the right cheek, turn the left also ; and if any man take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him.'¹⁸ Were these words spoken only to a chosen few ? were they spoken to recluses, or to men living in the desert, or to religious in cloisters, or to priests at the altar ? They were spoken to the people on the mountain, and in them to us. The Sermon on the Mount is the law of perfection given to the Christian people of the world : it is given to you. Our Divine Master calls us to use our liberty as Christians, to rise above the low level of that which is absolutely necessary by the law of commandments, and to ascend up by the law of liberty towards Him, upon the mountain where He, our Light and our Life, dwells eternally. What was it that created the Christian world ? Was it the Decalogue that was given from Sinai ? What was it covered the whole world with the fruitfulness of Christian perfection ? It was the Sermon on the Mount. It was the law of perfection revealed to us in the Face of Jesus Christ, and left to our liberty to be fulfilled out of love and generosity for the sake of our Divine Master. And therefore Saint James writes : ' Of His own will He hath begotten us again by the word of truth, that we may be the first-fruits

¹⁸ S. Matt. v. 39.

of His creatures.' ¹⁹ Christians are the first-fruits of the Holy Ghost. Look at the heathen nations, out of which we were taken. Compare the Christian people with the nations of the ancient world. I may say, compare the one Holy Catholic Church with the nations which, once of its unity, have now fallen away from it. Tell me where is to be found the Sermon on the Mount ; where is to be found voluntary poverty, where is to be found obedience even unto death, where the spirit of martyrs, where the self-denial of confessors, where the meekness of the forgiving, and the mercy of those who die for their brethren ? These things are to be found wheresoever the law of liberty and the gift of counsel are the light and the guidance of men. This, then, belongs to all, but there are some among us to whom this is an especial obligation of charity. It is necessary, indeed, that we should have this spirit in us, if we are to be the pastors of the flock. Woe to the shepherd who does not go out before his flock, who is not ahead of his sheep in all perfection, who does not bear the light of a life bright with the reflection of his Divine Master. The pastor of the flock must lead the way. He must preach more by what he is than by what he says : not only in the ways of obedience,

¹⁹ S. James i. 18.

but in all the ways of grace, of piety, of charity, and of humility. He must be to them a guide who is always before them. He must preach these things even when his lips are closed. Woe to us, dear brethren, if we do not go before our flock. We shall all be judged at the last day; but our judgment will be tenfold more searching than yours.

To those who have the guidance of souls, the gift of counsel gives the light to discern between leprosy and leprosy. When they sit as judges in the confessional, this light of discernment enables them to know the innocent from the guilty. When they sit there as spiritual physicians, it teaches them how to apply the remedies. Therefore, I say again, woe to us pastors if we are not guided by the gift of counsel. To you also, fathers and mothers, to you masters and mistresses, to you who have subjects or dependents, whether they be children or servants—to you also this gift of counsel is necessary: first, that you may know how to guide yourselves; and next, that you may know how to govern those that look up to you for guidance. Such, then, is the nature of this gift.

1. Why is it, then, that there are so few who manifest this gift of counsel? Why are there so few wise among us, why are people so worldly, why are they so imprudent, why are they so rash, why do they live

at random, why will they not even listen to advice? What is the reason of all this? I will tell you. This gift of counsel lies dormant in them; it is oppressed, kept down by their own mental and moral faults. They have made their ear dull of hearing and their eye dark, so that they cannot discern. The first great antagonist of this spirit of counsel is the wisdom of the world. And the wisdom of the world is the fashion and opinion of men possessed with the spirit which is of the world and not of God. The maxims, the traditions, the habits of thought, and the habits of life which spring from flesh and blood—‘the prudence of the flesh,’²⁰ as the Holy Ghost calls it—these things stifle the voice of counsel. Our Divine Lord reproached the Pharisees in Jerusalem because they made the ‘commandments of God of no effect by their traditions’²¹—that is, by their rigorous, fantastic, and artificial habits of mind; by their precepts and definitions, which perverted the literal meaning of the law of God, and inverted its spiritual intention: teaching men to pay tithes of mint, anise, and cummin—things of no moment—and to neglect the greater commandments of the law—humility, charity, and justice. Now this is true, in some degree, of us all. This is the reason why so few men

²⁰ Rom. viii. 6.²¹ S. Mark vii. 13.

are wise, so few Christians are spiritually and supernaturally led by the gift of counsel.

There are subtil kinds of pride which make men foolish. The love of pre-eminence; the inordinate desire of their own proper excellence; a self-conscious straining to be spiritual guides of other men, to correct their faults, to criticise their actions and their state before God, and to go about setting others right — these are some of the least perceived and subtilest workings of pride. The men of culture, as they call themselves, and as they delight that others should call them, are intellectual Pharisees. With mutual admiration they turn each other's heads. The greatest intellects are sometimes found in the smallest moral characters. The want of counsel makes them to be strange mixtures of greatness and of littleness.

There is also a spirit of presumption which is in every one of us. We trust ourselves; we give counsel to every one, and we will not take it from any man. At most, we will listen if they counsel us according to our own likings, and speak pleasant things; but if they say anything which touches our self-love, we turn from them as shallow heads, helpless advisers, useless talkers, in whom there is no light. We set ourselves upon a pinnacle of the temple; or we believe ourselves to have wings, and to be soaring

into heights of the spiritual life, while as yet we have not trod the first steps in the path of humility. This presumption, the root of which is in all of us, will, if indulged, destroy and utterly extinguish the gift of counsel.

2. Finally, there is an impetuosity in the nature of every one. There are some men so precipitate that they will not listen for a moment to the advice of anybody. Flesh and blood impels them; they start with vehemence in the way in which they will to go, without listening to advice. Their natural precipitation they mistake for zeal; but it mars everything. They are led by their own spirit; but those only that are 'led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.'²² And to be led by the Spirit of God means this: that before we move from our place we ask God to guide us. We ask the Holy Spirit of counsel to give us light to know what is right, what is well-pleasing, what is more perfect, what in us and for us is best to do, or to be done. But impetuous men are led by the flesh, not by the Spirit. They invert the divine order; and having set out in the way of their own choosing, they come to crosses and sorrows. Then they begin to ask for counsel, and perhaps they ask it of God; but they

²² Rom. viii. 14.

ask it too late. They are already so committed that they cannot go back. At last they so persuade themselves, that they will not follow good advice even if it were given. We have an example of this in Holy Scripture. The prophet Balaam was invited to curse the people of God. He knew from the beginning that to do so was a sin ; nevertheless, he did not refuse. Three times he offered sacrifice as if to ask counsel from God ; three times the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he was constrained to bless the people. He had it in his heart to curse them ; that is, he had set his heart upon the reward which was offered to him, and to gain it he was willing to go on. Before he took counsel, he had chosen his own path ; and the end was this : he wearied the patience of God, and the angel of the Lord left the road open and let him go his own way. The reward of Balaam was, that when the enemies of God were overthrown, he too was slain by the sword. So men try to force their will upon God, and to make His will give way, that they may do their own. Saint Augustine says : ‘Thou, O Lord, givest counsel to all that ask. If they ask of Thee divers things, Thou always answerest the same ; Thou answerest clearly enough, but they will not hear Thee, for they ask the things they desire, and they wish to make Thy

will bend to theirs. Thou answerest that which is Thy will, and they hear what they will not; and therefore they do it not. He is the best servant who does not desire that God should say the things that he wills, but who desires himself to will the things that God says.' And therefore, dear brethren, we must try and mortify this impetuous and precipitate self-will which is in us. There is a twofold leprosy of the soul of every man—that is, self-will and self-counsel; and both are aberrations: *duplex lepra, propria voluntas et proprium consilium*—the pride of his own will, and the pride of his own judgment.

3. To sum up in few words what I have said: let us, to the utmost of our power, submit our will to the will of God before we ask to know what it is His will we should do. Let us say: 'Lord, my heart is ready, my heart is ready;' 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.' When you kneel at the holy Mass, put your heart upon the paten and let it be offered up. God will counsel you. If you do His will, even though it cross your own, then you have the surest sign that you are not following your own choice.

Let the intentions of your heart be pure. 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see

God.' ²³ Even in this world, in everything which relates to their earthly life, there is a certain radiance which comes from the presence of God to assure them that they are walking in His sight. Then let your intentions be single as the light. Do not try to serve Him and at the same time try to serve the world. If you try to please men, you are not the servants of Jesus Christ. If you live to please yourselves, you are seeking 'the things which are your own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's.' ²⁴ Desire, then, to please God above all things, and all things shall be added unto you. If you cannot do all you desire, at least desire great things for His sake. Our Divine Lord said, 'I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto little ones.' ²⁵ These divine words mean precisely this: God will guide the humble in the way of truth, and of salvation, and of perfection, and of perseverance. He will be their Counsellor and their spiritual Guide. And our Divine Lord said again: 'Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and humble of heart,

²³ S. Matt. v. 8.

²⁴ Phil. ii. 21.

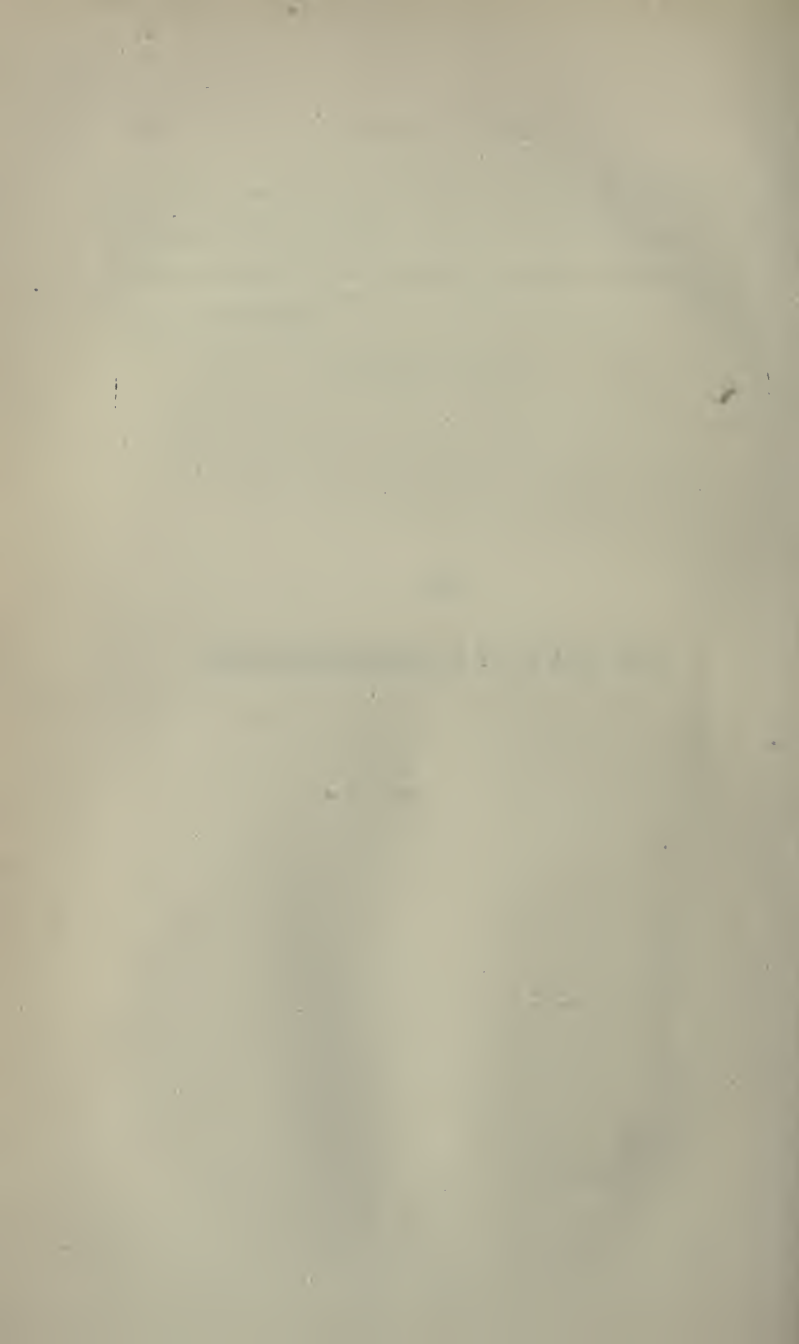
²⁵ S. Matt. xi. 25.

and you shall find rest to your souls; for My yoke is sweet and My burden light.'²⁶ Freely choose His service; for it is your freedom, and its own exceeding great reward.

²⁶ S. Matt. xi. 29, 30.

XIII.

THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING.



THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING.

Therefore from the day that we heard it we have ceased not to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. COLOS. i. 9.

WE have examined the nature of the two gifts of the Holy Ghost which perfect the practical intellect—that is to say, the intellect as it is in contact with the will and with its moral perfections. These two are the gift of science, or knowledge, and the gift of counsel.

The gift of knowledge we have seen to be a certain special light given to the intellect whereby to understand the will and the presence of God in all things. From our earliest spiritual consciousness in childhood we are assisted by this gift of knowledge. It is closely related to the gift of piety: by which the character of a child is formed, and through which a perpetual light enters into the soul. Such is the meaning of the words, ‘I have understood more

than all my teachers, because Thy testimonies are my meditation.¹ This gift of knowledge pervades the whole Christian life from its earliest consciousness.

The gift of counsel, as we saw, signifies a certain light and discernment of grace, whereby we perceive not only that which we are bound by the Commandments to do, but that which, if freely done, is more for the glory of God and more for our own sanctification. As, for instance, the Sermon on the Mount contains the whole code of perfection, and in that code there are a multitude of counsels to which we are not literally bound by the Ten Commandments; but any one who desires to be spiritually perfect must freely adopt those counsels as rules for his life. To give an example. Some persons have taken as the rule of their conduct that when they are in doubt whether of two things they shall do, they will always choose that which they believe to be more for the glory of God. They are not bound to do so, but they are prompted by the law of liberty, which is the law of the love of God and of our neighbour written upon our hearts, and making the will a law to itself.

Having thus finished this first part of the subject, which relates to the practical intellect, there

¹ Ps. cxviii. 99.

remains only the second which relates to the speculative intellect, and that again divides itself into two; namely, the gift of understanding and the gift of wisdom. I call it the gift of understanding, because the word 'intellect,' as it is in the text, would only lead to ambiguity. We will therefore take the common English equivalent—namely, 'understanding.'

I. First of all, we have every one of us by nature the gift of intellect or understanding. But this natural intellect is not the Gift of the Holy Ghost; it is a gift of the order of nature, not of the supernatural order of grace. Now the gift of intellect, or of reason, which all men have by nature, consists in a certain faculty in the soul, like the eye in the body, by which we see, know, and understand. The eye is so organised and adapted to the light that, when illuminated by the material light, we see: and the capacity and the reach of the eye are developed by practice and by experience. We all know that sight in a child is not in its normal state until by experience it has acquired what we may call the habit of sight, by which it can combine, and judge, and measure the objects before it. So also the natural intellect has a power of perception or understanding, the limits of which we have never reached. We know there are limits, because the reason of man is not infinite; but the

limits of the understanding within us have never yet been ascertained. It is developed more and more in proportion as its powers are called out, and when its powers are called into act they seem to be fixed. They do not again recede. Two men who have exactly the same natural powers will be so unequal, if the one be educated and the other be uneducated, that they will seem to be almost of two different grades or of two different kinds of being. This natural intellect is in us all, and the men of science who believe nothing often manifest the development of this natural intellect in a very high degree of culture, subtilty, energy, and strength. But this is altogether distinct from the gift of intellect or understanding, of which we have now to speak. This gift of intellect or understanding, as it is a gift of the Holy Ghost, is found in no man who is out of the grace of God; and therefore in no one who is an unbeliever in the revelation of God, and therefore in no one who is out of charity with God and his neighbour. It is a special intellectual power² or perfection given to those who, corresponding to the light of

² 'Intellectus est habitus supernaturalis, non concreatus naturaliter omnibus sed simul cum charitate et gratia menti infusus per quem prima principia Christianæ sapientiæ cognoscuntur.' Dionys. Carthusian. Opp. min. tom. i. tract. ii. art. 21.

faith and to the Spirit of God working within them, receive, over and above the light and the power of natural reason, a further supernatural gift, which becomes habitual like a special faculty. I cannot better explain what it is than by saying, that it is a supernatural habit, or quality, or faculty abiding in the intellect, whereby it is elevated and enabled, first, to understand supernatural truth with especial clearness; and, next, to penetrate into the reasons and the motives of faith; and, lastly, to exhibit and to prevail on others, by the exhibition of the truth, to believe in the same. It is therefore a discernment, like a subtil intuition of the eye, which penetrates with great precision below the surface and discerns that which lies beneath it. *Intellectus*, we are told, is from *intus legere*, the reading of that which is within the letter. When the eye reads the page of a book it reads that which is without; it reads the letters. But the intellect reads that which is within—the meaning of the letters, and of their combinations, and of their suggestions. All this is unintelligible except to those who have an understanding of the deeper sense of what is read. Now this understanding of the full and inward sense, this perception of what lies beneath the letter, or, as we say, that which is to be read between the lines of a book—the knowledge

of the substance and of the implicit sense—is that which we attain by this gift of understanding. I might give examples in this way. There is in the whole revelation of God a harmony, a proportion, an analogy of parts, which is not perceived except by those who have this special light and discernment. For the want of this perception, as we shall see hereafter, many men with great intellectual power become sceptics. Things which a mere child would know they do not know: things that a child would solve to them are insoluble difficulties. Such, then, is the nature of this gift.

2. Now we will go on to see what are its operations. First, as we have seen, it enables us to understand with a special clearness the hidden meaning of the revelation of God. You will perhaps say, ‘But how can a man believe what he does not understand?’ I have already said that the natural intellect is in all men, and the natural intellect must be used, it must be exerted to its utmost strength, in examining the evidence upon which we believe. That is perfectly true. Reason is the preamble of faith. Unless a man were convinced by evidence that Christianity is a divine revelation, how could he believe it? Unless he believed upon evidence that Holy Scripture is the Word of God, how could he accept it? Unless he be-

lieved upon evidence that the Catholic Church is the only and true Church of Jesus Christ, how could he submit to it? It is quite true, then, that the natural intellect must go first, and must examine what may be called the preambles, before we can believe. After having examined the proper evidences, and after being intellectually convinced that they prove Christianity to be a divine revelation, and the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and the Catholic Church to be the Church of God, and the like—then we believe with a rational faith. There is no act more entirely intellectual, and no act of the reason higher or more perfect, than the believing in a Divine Teacher. It is an act of submission to the teaching of God. Therefore, do not let anybody imagine that faith is a blind act, or an act of superstitious credulity, or the act of those who cannot use their reason. It is in the highest sense a precise and perfect act of our intellectual power to submit our reason to a Divine Teacher; and having accepted the whole revelation on His authority, it is an intellectual act all the way along the path of faith to examine and to understand what we believe. We must know *what* it is, at least in outline, and we must know *why* we ought to believe it, before we can believe at all. Having first believed Christianity to be a divine revelation, then we begin

to examine its details. But we no longer examine as in doubt whether to believe it or not: but in faith that we may understand more fully what we believe. We do not test its details as critics, to pronounce whether or no they are credible, whether or no they mean this or that, whether or no God could or could not have revealed such and such a thing, but we read the Word of God as disciples, with a consciousness that we are in the presence of a Divine Teacher; that we have in our hands a document which is divine; and that though our faith is founded upon an intellectual conviction, it rises into a living and personal consciousness that we are related to a Divine Person, and that we can say what the Apostle said: 'I know Whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day;' ³ I know, that is, of Whom I am learning this truth, and I know that He will never mislead me, for He is Himself the uncreated Truth. 'But having believed,' Saint Anselm says, 'as it would be contrary to the divine order for us to examine and to discuss by reasoning the revelation of God until we have believed it, so it would be an act of great negligence on our part if, after we have believed it, we did not try thoroughly to understand it,' thoroughly

³ 2 Tim. i. 12.

to penetrate under the surface, beneath the letter into the substance, into the analogies, and proportions, and relations of truth with truth.

Now the gift of intellect or understanding is precisely that gift of the Holy Spirit which enables us to understand the meaning of what we believe from the time when we believe it. We have here, therefore, a distinct description of its office. Let us take an example or two. We believe in the existence of God by natural light. We believe that God is one in three Persons by the light of revelation. A child knows so much as this from his Catechism; but those who have the gift of understanding will go on to contemplate in the Holy Trinity, so far as the human mind can understand divine things, what are the relations of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; how They are three Persons, how They are coequal, how They are coeternal, how They differ only in that They are related to each other, and that all things in God are common save only the relations of Fatherhood, Sonship, and Procession. Therefore I may say, that the office of this gift of intellect is like that of a lens, by which we steadfastly look at any natural object until we see lines and features that are not visible to our ordinary sight. The naked eye cannot perceive them, but the power of the microscope reveals them;

and as the powers of the microscope are multiplied, we see more and learn more of the object, which still remains always the same to our natural sight. I might take for another example the Incarnation, and I hardly know any example more complete. The one phrase, 'The Word was made flesh,' contains the whole theology of the Incarnation in all its treatises. Compare that doctrine with the Nicene Creed, where it is said that the Son of God is God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, consubstantial with the Father before all worlds. This is but an expansion of the words of Saint John. Take next the Creed of Saint Athanasius, in which the Incarnation is unfolded in precise terms—the two natures, the two substances, the one Person, the perfect humanity. Take next the third part of the *Summa* of Saint Thomas and the works of Petavius. This gradual unfolding of the simple utterance, 'The Word was made flesh,' is an example of the action of the gift of understanding analysing and expanding the simple declaration of Saint John. The same might be shown in the doctrine of the most Holy Sacrament, of the Real Presence, of the mode of the Real Presence, and its many other truths.

Lastly, this gift of understanding has relation to the divine sovereignty and the divine operations in

the world. I will put an example which like the pillar in the wilderness, is all cloud and darkness to those who have not this gift of understanding, and all light and clearness to those who have. If there be anything written in history, it is this: that the Church has always been persecuted and that the world has always been prosperous; and yet we are called upon to believe that God is the Sovereign over the world and over the Church. Nevertheless, we see faith always suffering, and we see unbelief always in prosperity. The men of this world taunt us with this. They are always saying, 'Look at those countries that have rejected the Catholic faith, how they thrive; look at their material progress in everything, their culture, their advancement, their solidity, their wealth, their commerce, their enterprise. Look at your Church. Why, the Head of it is shut up in his house; all the nations of the world are rejecting him one after another; they have ceased to believe in him; and you tell us this is the kingdom of God.' Have you any difficulty in understanding this paradox? When the Divine Head of the Church was upon earth was He not rejected; was He not isolated; did not men disbelieve in Him; was He not persecuted; was He not crucified? And is He not the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and has He not all

power in heaven and in earth? The world which prospers for a day has its hour fixed, and its doom is certain. The Psalmist, when he was perplexed with the prosperity of the ungodly, was cast down and wondered until he went into the sanctuary of God, and then he understood the end of these men. It is precisely the light of this gift of understanding which makes us to know at this moment that, despite of all successes, the warfare of the world against the Church can never prevail; that, despite of all reverses and defeats, the Church must be more than conqueror. Therefore, Pius IX. still sits upon the throne of Peter; and Peter will reign unto the end. Whatever comes, one thing cannot come. The world will never subdue to its will the Church of God.

The gift of understanding enables all who believe, and therefore, in an eminent degree, the doctors and teachers of the Church, to propagate and to defend the revelation of God. The Church has a threefold office. It is a witness of those things which in the beginning it saw and heard; secondly, it is a teacher of truth in the sphere of intellect; and thirdly, an intellectual judge discerning between truth and falsehood. Its discernment is not only with the natural precision of the human reason, nor

only by its natural lights, but also by its supernatural consciousness it discerns between faith and heresy. It is by the gift of understanding that we can solve the apparent difficulties of belief. To those who judge by the letter, or by outward facts, the sorrows and miseries of the world seem to obscure its witness to the goodness, if not to the existence, of God. But how else shall we account for the existence of the world, or for the freedom of the will in man? In like manner, how are we to account for the Christian world? You see the natural world around us: you believe in its existence, and I know not how you can doubt of its Creator. So of the Christian world. You see in the midst of this natural world the rise and expansion of a Christian world. You cannot deny its existence, whether you believe it to be of divine foundation or not. But I do not know how an intellectual man or a consecutive reasoner can believe that it had no founder; for 'every house is built by some man, but He that created all things is God.'⁴ Surely He that built this Christian world must be something more than man. Saint Augustine said to the heretics of his day: '*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*' It is true that we are surrounded by unbelievers, and by Jews, and by heathens,

⁴ Heb. iii. 4.

and by heretics, and by schismatics ; but in the midst of all this confusion the Church of God, sitting calm in its seat of truth and power, looks round about, and without care or fear is evidence of its own truth. As a tree still rests upon its root, though branches be broken from it by the wind, or by the lightning, or by man, so the Church stands no less firm and immovable in the midst of those who fall from it. All that once was part of itself lies dead under its shadow, but it remains living and unshaken as it was before.

Once more. Does it not stand to reason that error must vary from itself? Draw a thousand lines, curved or straight, with a pencil, and try to find any two of them that are identical. Walk a thousand paces, and then try to return upon your footsteps. Do you think that you could plant your foot a thousand times in the same place? Put it to the test. You will find that there is but one thing which in all places is identical. The truth never varies, errs, or changes. Wherever the truth is it is the same. The Divine mind never varies. The mind of man divinely guided is everywhere the same. But the actions of the unaided human mind are inconstant and variable; in every mind they are diverse, in every time they diverge, in every place they put off their iden-

tity. There is the variation of infirmity, of forgetfulness, of inadvertence, of wilful innovation, of vain-glorious singularity, of proud conceit. Error detects itself by its multiplicity. Look, then, at the Catholic Church, and look at all the forms of fragmentary Christianity that surround it. Which is truth and which is error? The gift of understanding can read beneath the complex pretensions of error the simplicity and certainty of the only truth.

We will take one more example. Truth comes from Him Who knows what is in man, from Him Who bears in His hand the key of the human intellect and of the human heart. The truth of God in Jesus Christ is so precisely fitted to the heart and intellect of man, that it alone can move through the wards. Therefore, it is alone the true key. Find, if you can, any other religion or any fragmentary form of Christianity which can accomplish this. We see every day that those who try their mutilated religion upon the human intellect and the human heart break the wards and hamper the lock. There is but one key, and that is the Key of David, which for these eighteen hundred years has opened, and no man could shut, and has shut, and no man could open, the kingdom of God in the soul. We must choose between one of two things: we must either believe the Catholic

faith, or find a rational and intellectual solution of the unity of truth, and of its adaptation to human nature and of the existence of the Christian world.

3. A third office of this gift is to reduce the revelation of truth to the form of a science. We hear much of science in these days. We hear of physical, and social, and historical science; but as soon as any man says that theology is a science, at once we see the supercilious change and lines of countenance, which we all well know, in those who have the courtesy at least to keep silence. Let us ask what, after all, is science? Science means the knowledge we have of truth by resolving it into its first principles, which again are self-evident. Now I fully admit that theology is not a science in that strict sense; because revelation, which is the matter of theology, is to be resolved into the authority of God. Therefore it is not self-evident to the human reason; but for that cause I altogether deny that history, and a great deal of that which we are called upon to receive as science, is science, or even scientific. I fully admit that mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, are sciences; and I would add, the sciences of the physical world. They may be tested by experiment, they may be resolved into self-evident principles; therefore they may be called science. And I will also use the word science of theology, for this

reason : that whatever is methodical, clear, definite, precise, whatever can be stated in its principles, may be called scientific, if not in the strictness of propriety, at least next to it; and in that sense it is quite true that the revelation of faith is a supernatural science. For instance, there is nothing which is so definite in its conceptions, in its terms, in its definitions, as the Catholic faith. I have already given one example. Take the theology of the Nature, and of the Persons, and of the Perfections of God. Can anything be more precise? Its precision is turned to our reproach. Take again the Athanasian Creed; take the definitions by which we express every doctrine of the faith. I need not prove that these things are definite. The world cries out against us for that very definiteness; the world denounces us because we are dogmatic. If we were not dogmatic, who would know what we teach? If our doctrines had neither beginning nor ending, nor circumference, like the opinions that are tossed to and fro by conflicting sects, nobody would know what we mean. The admission of one indefinite word into an argument, like the admission of one false figure into a sum, confuses the whole; and therefore the Church from the beginning has been most rigorously precise in the choice of the very words by which it conveys the faith. Having defined its

doctrines, it assembles them and groups them together. Your baptismal Creed is the germ of a whole science. The twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed are, in fact, the text of the whole theology which the Councils of the Church have elaborated in every age to this day, perpetually analysing more and more exactly the meaning of every revealed truth by this gift of understanding, and then combining them all together into perfect unity and symmetry, and yet never venturing to draw a line round it, or to say this contains the whole of the meaning; and that because in this life 'we know in part, and we prophesy in part,' while we are waiting for that time when the perfect shall come, and what is partial shall be done away. We do not venture now to declare that we possess the whole truth of any mystery, but only so far as it is revealed. If you look from a high mountain, you will see a multitude of paths and roads and rivers diverging every way. At last they reach the horizon and vanish. So it is with the truths of revelation. We can trace them so far as they are revealed to us, but at last they reach the vanishing points, where they pass into the infinite mind of God; there we cannot follow them. Theology does not venture to give account of anything beyond that which has been revealed; but that which has been

revealed, theology, with a precise treatment and exact method, defines: and combining truths together, it brings out that which is implicitly revealed. Theology surrounds the faith, like the radiance round the sun. The science of God radiates from the baptismal Creed. This, then, is another operation of the gift of intellect.

4. We now come to a further office of this gift. When theology comes in contact, and it may be in conflict, with the sciences of the world, it is the office of the Church to harmonise the science of revealed truth with the sciences of the human intellect. We are told that it cannot be harmonised with physical sciences, and the stock example which is always given us is this: that Galileo was condemned for teaching the motion of the earth. It is true, indeed, that a book of Galileo was examined at a time when the whole world believed in the motion of the sun, and when the motion of the earth was not as yet a scientific truth. It had not been yet established by science; nor was it scientifically proved for one hundred years afterwards. For a century after Galileo some of the highest intellects still believed in the motion of the sun. Many in this country lived and died disbelieving the hypothesis of Galileo, and believing it to be contrary to Scripture. Therefore the

Church, at a time when the doctrine was but a hypothesis and a conjecture, apparently running counter to the belief of mankind, and to what seemed to be the words of Scripture, discountenanced a book which tended to unsettle the belief of men both in natural and supernatural truth. The Church defined nothing, and uttered no doctrine. It made a disciplinary prohibition to protect men from the disturbing effect of an unproved hypothesis. And what has been the course of the Church since then? From the moment that the motion of the earth was established as a scientific truth the Church has accepted it; and why? Because the Church has no revelation of physical science. Holy Scripture is not a book of cosmical science. No revelation whatever is made of astronomy. The Book of Joshua uses the language of sense, and not the language of science, in saying that the sun stood still. Therefore faith and theology are in no way implicated, and in no way in conflict. They who accuse the Church betray only the animus to throw stones which fall on their own heads.

Once more. We are told by men of science that the chronology of the Church is false; that the age of the world, instead of 6,000 years, is at least 40,000 or 50,000, and I do not know how many more. On

what ground do they tell us this? Because they say that the accumulation of alluvial matter at the mouths of great rivers could not be deposited within a less period of time. They say, too, that they have found bones of I do not know what animals in strata which would require for their formation at least 40,000 years. My answer is this: Have you had a letter from heaven to tell you? What you call facts you make and unmake, and make so often over again, that we never know where to find you. They are to us *nebulæ*, or gaseous vapours, without fixity or permanent form. You serve them up to us like new articles of science, and we recognise the old stamp and the old worn-out brass and copper of exploded systems. Till you agree among yourselves upon some permanent facts, we must say: You know little about it. We have positive proof that the deposits of rivers vary according to many conditions, such as the fall of rain, the volume of the flood, the speed of the currents, the beds of rivers. In a few years waters have been seen to accumulate, or to sweep away, masses equal to any of these for the deposit of which the chronological tables of our modern philosophy would assign a thousand. Again, they tell us that geology is inconsistent with the doctrine of the creation of the world. Why? Were

they there to see? On what do they found this assertion? How can they account for the existence of the world over which they would establish their intellectual lordship? This physical world was either eternal, or it was created, or it made itself. This last no sane man will say. The first is to deify both matter and decay. Nothing remains but to believe that it had a beginning, and therefore a cause; but if it was caused it was created. I do not know what your intellect may say to this, but mine absolutely refuses to accept any other supposition. I should violate not only the gift of understanding, but my natural reason, if I were to say that the world was without a cause, or that it caused itself. When, then, we are told that geology has shaken the foundations of revelation, I say, Not yet. In those who already did not believe, in those who use such language as a plea for unbelief, I can understand it; but that any man who ever had the light of faith could be shaken by such pretended and periodically shifting facts, I can hardly imagine. Such a man would not only lose his faith, but abdicate his reason. Then we are told: 'If you say that man was descended from a single pair, how can you account for the multitude of nations?' Well, the more we search out the origin of mankind, the more clearly we find that the multi-

plicity of races may be traced up into four great families, and these four again into two; and that those two great families part on either side of one tract or region, pointing to an unity of origin. As science advances it does not shake, but confirms, revelation. Then they ask, 'How can you account for the multiplicity of tongues, dialects, and languages?' In like manner, the further we have analysed languages the more we find them to run up into dialects, and dialects to put off their peculiarities, and put on the likeness of an original speech. They gradually ascend upwards, like the races themselves, pointing to one fountain from which language came in the beginning. I do not here pretend to state these subjects adequately. I give them only as examples of the action of the gift of understanding. It is thus that the Church is adjusting, and harmonising with all that survives of true science the revelation committed to its custody.

I will take one more example. We hear a great deal of progress, intellectual advances, men of culture, and the like. Now I will ask, Has all the advancement of civilisation in ethics, in politics, and in social culture refuted, or superseded, or changed the bounds of one revealed truth? Does not Christianity remain at this moment imperishable and immutable?

It is constituted of these three aboriginal elements; namely, the purest and most perfect conception of God that man ever knew; the purest and most perfect conception of man, revealed in the Incarnation, that the world ever saw; the purest and most perfect morality—that is, the relations between God and man, and between man and man. I ask whether Christianity, which contains these three great and constructive elements, has in any sense been set aside or shaken by the intellectual, or moral, or political, or social progress of mankind? Has it elevated or corrected the Christian conception of God, or of man, or of morals? Now I will affirm that it has done no such thing. Like as the ark floated on the waters; the deeper they became, the higher it rose, so does Christianity at this moment repose in all calmness and majesty on the great flood of human science in its highest cultivation.

5. My only other point is this: that the Church, by the gift of understanding, ascertains and demonstrates the perfect unity of science. ‘*Deus scientiarum Tu es.*’ The Christian conception of the Divine Nature is an infinite Intelligence—the Fountain of all Sciences. There is but one Uncaused, one Infinite, and one Eternal; one Being Who is above all beings; and to the Uncreated all created being is subordinate.

It stands related to Him in an order of which He is the only Head.. There is a Hierarchy of Being, and God is the Lord of all; and this Hierarchy of Being is also a Hierarchy of Intelligence. All created intelligences are subordinate to the one uncreated intelligence of God. So also all sciences are related to the one science of God, from Whom all descend and to Whom all return; and in that hierarchy of sciences, theology, or the science of God, is the first and the Queen. All other sciences, physical and human—that is, relating to the world and to man—are subordinate, but inseparably united, because in God all truth is one. In the Divine mind all truths are in harmonious unity; all divergences, as we think them, are but apparent. We see only in part. Only a portion of the infinite mind of God is revealed to us. We have a part of an eternal writing unrolled; the rest is unrevealed. We cannot read the context. We see a part of the great chart or map of truth, in which we only can follow certain tracks and paths. A section of a diagram is before us, the complement of which we do not know; but when in the light of the kingdom of God we shall see even as we are seen; then the perfect unity of that intellectual light will be visible. Every eye shall see it; every intelligence shall be full. The white light of the day contains all prismatic colours,

which, when separated by human skill and made visible to the eye, seem to differ one from another; but when once more they are all resolved again into the perfect unity of the solar light, all differences are lost in an undivided splendour. So with the sciences of the world. So far as they are erroneous they will be hereafter cast out; so far as they are true they will all be taken up into that one infallible and uncreated light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Such then, dear brethren, is the action of this gift of intellect. Time would fail me if I were to attempt to point out what is its effect in forming the teachers of the Church. This I must pass over; but I cannot pass over one last truth. You are well aware that the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IX., has over and over again, in letters without number, in the Encyclical, and the Syllabus issued in the year 1864, condemned in the most express and peremptory terms the separation of philosophy and science from revelation, and has enjoined upon all men of science and all teachers of philosophy to cultivate both in union with, and in subordination to, that one divine science, the revelation of faith. The world has risen in uproar against this supreme voice. The men of science have everywhere clamoured against it as an

attempt to bring them into intellectual subjection. Professors of Germany rose up and appealed to Cæsar. The persecution of the Church which we see at this moment in Germany is nothing more than a revenge of the mortified pride of the men of culture and of the philosophers who are deposed from their seats of error by the Vatican Council. They were one by one put down. They were suspended by their bishops, and finally, because they would not obey, were put out; and being put out, they gathered themselves together to make head against the Church of God. But their end is sure. They will be scattered from before its face, as all heretics have ever been. The Holy See has always laid down this great and vital principle—namely, that secular and religious instruction shall never be parted in education. It has laid down this principle not only for the schools of the poor, but for the universities of the rich. It has never wavered; it has never receded, and it never will; and that because education is not the mere teaching of intellectual opinions. Education is the formation of the whole man—intellect, heart, will, character, mind, and soul. Whether it be the poor child in the parish school, or the son of the rich man in the university, it is all the same. The Catholic Church will accept as education

nothing less than the formation of the whole man. Therefore, when doctors and politicians talk of the separation of the religious and the secular element, the Church will have none of it, and that for this plain reason—instruction is not education. Secular teaching, without the light of faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, not only cannot form the man, but they deform the man. They form the man upon a false model; they unshape him from that original reflection of the image of God which is in him. First, they deprive him of light; and where light departs, darkness comes. The human mind, once deprived of the light of revelation, is filled with the clouds of unbelief or of credulity. It can give no account of God; it has no knowledge of His character or of its own nature. Is this education? Though a man were a professor of seven sciences, without the knowledge of God and of himself what is he? In the sight of God he is like the men of the old world which knew not God. He may be as wise as Empedocles or Aristotle, but he is not a Christian. He is not formed upon the type of Christianity: he is not after the example of Jesus Christ.

Lastly, where the mind is deprived of light it is perverted. The whole intellectual and moral nature loses its normal shape. It is perpetually conceiving

and giving out erroneous judgments, erroneous principles, erroneous maxims, which issue in erroneous and dangerous actions. The separation of religious from secular education wrecks altogether the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost in the souls of those who have been baptised. Is it a wonder, then, that the Catholic Church will never consent that its children shall be reared without the knowledge of their faith, or that education shall be so parted asunder that secular knowledge shall be made the subject of daily and earnest inculcation, and that religion should be left out as an accident, to be picked up when and as it may?

Finally, you all have this gift of understanding, if you are in a state of grace. Pray therefore every day, in the words of the Apostle, that you may 'be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.' Lay to heart two passages of Holy Scripture, for they are the words of the Holy Ghost : ' God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, and given the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of God

should shine unto them.’⁵ And: ‘For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened by His Spirit in the inward man; . . . that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, to know the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.’⁶

⁵ 2 Cor. ii. 4-6.

⁶ Ephes. iii. 14-19.

XIV.

THE GIFT OF WISDOM.



THE GIFT OF WISDOM.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. PROVERBS i. 7.

WHAT the root is to the tree in its full stature and in the full spread of its branches, that holy fear is to wisdom. Wisdom springs from holy fear as its root, and without holy fear, if there could at all be wisdom, there could be in it no stability. The wisest of all the sons of men before the Incarnation of the Son of God was Solomon, king of Israel, and his wisdom was not by acquisition only, but by an infused gift of God in answer to special prayer and a promise made by God Himself; nevertheless, the man who had become wise by the gift of God, whose wisdom reached over all the works and mysteries of God as then revealed, shamefully and utterly fell by impurity and by idolatry. Holy fear, then, is the beginning of the whole spiritual life; it is the stability and protection of the whole spiritual structure in man. Therefore wisdom, which is the last

of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, may be said to be the blossom, and the maturity, and, as it were, the perfection of all the seven gifts. Indeed, wisdom is the only gift of the Holy Ghost which bears a divine name. We do not call God Piety, or Intellect, or Science, but Wisdom is the name of God Himself; and the uncreated Wisdom of God is God Himself; and the uncreated Wisdom of God is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and the Son, Who is the image of the uncreated Wisdom of God, was incarnate for us, and the uncreated Wisdom of God was manifest among men, and, being manifest among men, has built for Himself a house,¹ *Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum*. And what is that house of Wisdom but the mystical Body of Jesus Christ? Those in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, by His indwelling He perfects in wisdom, and builds them up together as a temple for the inhabitation of God. Such is the Holy Catholic Church, visible in this world, and in communion with God and His saints in the world unseen.

We have already defined and explained the nature of intellect or understanding, and we saw that it consists in a certain penetrating and precise discernment, whereby the intellect can read the inner

¹ Wisdom ix. 1.

meaning, and substance, of the revelation of God, and of all things bearing upon it. Now in what does wisdom differ from intellect or understanding? It differs in this: that wisdom has two parts or elements; it is a certain divine light given to the soul, whereby it both sees and tastes God and divine things. There are, then, two distinct operations in it: there is a sight derived from the light of God, whereby divine things are seen, and a taste or a power of tasting those things, of knowing and discerning them by a taste of their divine sweetness. These two operations go together; therefore the light, together with the power of taste, or, in other words, illumination in the intellect, together with charity inflaming the heart, constitute the gift of wisdom. Now do not imagine that this gift is the exclusive property of saints; do not imagine that I am talking high things over your heads and my own, which have no application to us. The gift of wisdom is in every one of you, if you are in your baptismal grace. It is always expanding if you are faithful, or contracting if you are unfaithful, to the working of the Spirit of God. But there it still abides: there is not one of you that may not possess this gift in its fulness. The Book of Proverbs says: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning,' or the first principle, 'of wisdom,' and

‘humility goeth before glory.’ Now the path of humility is open to everybody, and the glory that is at the end of it is, therefore, within the reach of all: the foot of that ladder is indeed upon earth, and the humble may ascend it, but the head of that ladder is in the glory of God, and the poor and the unlettered may go up into the light of the presence of the Almighty often more surely than the cultured and refined.

1. I have said that wisdom is the blossom, or the perfection, of the seven gifts. They all grow up into it in symmetry, and form, and beauty; they all unite together in completing the outline of wisdom: you cannot take one of them away without mutilating in some degree the perfection of wisdom. I have already said that these seven gifts are in every one of you, unconscious as you may be, or may have been, that you possess them; and they work in you, though it is true that they have a special proportion to the several ages and stages of our human life. For instance, holy fear is the gift which first manifests itself in childhood, and piety manifests itself in youth, and fortitude in manhood; the intellectual perfections, or the intellectual gifts, come out, perhaps, simultaneously in various degrees, or some come out sooner and some later; but there they are—all

lie hidden simultaneously. It is a mistake to suppose that any one can have the gift of wisdom without having the gift of knowledge ; or the gift of fortitude without having the gift of piety, and the like ; but it is quite true that they work unequally in different people, and that the inequality produces such a diversity that it seems as if some possessed one and some possessed another of those gifts, but that hardly any possessed all. The truth is, that one gift is prominent in some and less prominent in others. For instance, the human countenance has only the same features all over the family of man, and those features are very few, and the number is the same : nevertheless, they are capable of such infinite variety that no two human faces are perfectly alike. Again, we know how complex and elaborate are some of the harmonies of music, yet that all the harmonies that were ever heard by the ear of man may be resolved up into the seven simple notes. And so may all the perfections of the human soul be resolved up into the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost—only with this distinction : that as some features are prominent in some men, and some tones or notes are dominant in some music, so certain gifts of the Holy Ghost are dominant, and rule over the hearts and the wills of some in a greater degree than in

others, and thereby give a distinct impress and proportion to the character. And yet, although they act simultaneously, they act unequally, but for some mysterious reason which it is beyond us to understand they produce in the end the same result. We are often asked, Is it possible that men who are so different one from another—some so exceptionally good, others so inveterately evil—could have been born in the same equal condition? Does not this great diversity divest them in some way of their personal responsibility? Must it not be in their very nature from birth? Not at all. If there were natural inequalities, the adaptation of grace to nature would redress them, and bring us all back again to one law, though not to one level; namely, that whether we have five talents, or one only, we are alike responsible to God for working out our salvation, and that God has given to every one of us, whatever may be the diversity of our natural character and disposition, the gifts, and aids, and graces which adjust the balance. For the moment I set aside all who are living out of the grace of God, because, as I told you in the beginning, these seven gifts are to be found only in those who are in a state of grace or in charity and the fear of God. In those who are in grace we see such diversities that, at first sight, it seems as if they

were of different natures. For instance, some people exhibit an immense energy of will in doing good, and yet the amount of their intellectual light is small; on the other hand, some men have a gift of mental prayer and of contemplation, but they are wanting in perseverance and in firmness. The explanation is, that in the latter the gifts which perfect the will are but feebly exercised, and those that perfect the intellect have been more developed; and in the former the gifts which form the solidity of the character have been more developed, and therefore increased, and those that relate to the intellect have been less so.

Let us take an example. In the science of God, that is, in what we call theology, there are many branches; one is dogmatic theology, or the science of the revealed truth of God, precisely conceived and definitely expressed. Take, as an example of this, Saint Thomas Aquinas, in whom the gift of intellect was sanctified in the highest degree. There is no parallel to the writings of Saint Thomas, in point of precision, consecutiveness, and unity, but the reasonings of the highest mathematicians. Or, take again a writer like Saint Alphonsus, whose whole life was spent as a pastor in the guidance of souls. His writings are the most elaborate, minute, and delicate examination of the laws and rules of duty as leading

to the perfection of the soul. In him we see the gift of counsel. Or, again, take Saint John Chrysostom, the great preacher on the reformation of life and morals, in him we see the gift of science. And, lastly, Saint Bonaventure, who united together two things—a singular light of penetrating and precise intellect in dogma, together with an ardent fervour and glow of piety and of love to God. This is exactly the gift of wisdom. Moreover, this same gift of wisdom is variously shown as modified by combination with other gifts in the four great Doctors of the Church. First, in the writings of Saint Augustine we see one thing predominate throughout—namely, the operations of grace in the soul, working by charity, and the outward expression of it in the world-wide unity of the Church: secondly, in Saint Leo the Great the mystery of the Incarnation, and the authority and the supreme power of the Holy See: thirdly, in Saint Jerome, the translator and commentator of Holy Scripture, in a wonderful perfection, a knowledge of the literal sense of the written Word of God: and, lastly, in Saint Gregory the Great, an intuitive perception of the meaning of Holy Scripture; not the literal meaning only, but the moral meaning of the Word of God. Now here are four diversities of intellect, so great that we see

at once that they were different operations of the same Divine Spirit, Who by His various gifts perfects the intellect of those whom He chooses out to teach the faithful.

There are those who tell us that the gift of faith is for women and children. With scornful impertinence they imply that none but fools believe. My answer is, Look at the Christian world; tell me what is the root out of which your men of science and your mathematicians have sprung. Whence came the intellectual maturity of your political philosophers, your sceptical metaphysicians, who deny the existence of the soul and the being of God? What lifted them up to the intellectual elevation from which they can look down and pretend to despise those who believe, and to criticise and reject even the revelation of God? It is the sanctified intellect of Christendom which has built up the house of Wisdom. It is the mother of the whole race of those that are born again. It is Christendom from which they sprung, and from which they fell, as rotten branches from the Tree of Life. The intellect of man illuminated by faith is conformed to the uncreated intelligence of God Himself; and if the world scorns you as unintellectual because you believe in the revelation of God and submit your

reason to the teaching of divine authority, you can well bear it.

2. Next, this gift of wisdom, being, as I said, the perfection of the seven gifts, perfects the soul itself. It illuminates the intellect, it moderates the tumultuous and rebellious passions ; it rectifies the affections of the soul ; it directs the will to God. We must distinguish between passions and affections. In our Divine Lord there were no passions. We never use that word in speaking of the Incarnation. We say indeed, that there were in Him pro-passions ; that is to say, His human nature was like ours in all its susceptibilities, but being perfectly under the dominion and control of His own will, there was in those susceptibilities neither turbulence nor inordinateness nor disorder. Now there are in us a multitude of affections which become turbulent and inordinate : nevertheless, they are from God. The use we make of them alone is ours. In their right use and measure they are holy. For instance, zeal is an impetuous desire to do good ; and yet zeal sometimes becomes a wildfire which sets the world in flames, and in the end leads men to think that it does a service to God when it puts men to death. Such was the zeal of Saul. The gift of wisdom does not root out zeal ; it chastens and rectifies it. So also with anger.

The Apostle says, 'Be angry and sin not;' which shows that anger is not necessarily a sin. Anger is implanted in our hearts, just as strength is implanted in the muscle of the arm. Anger has its proper use. Anger is the executive power of justice; but if you allow anger, which God gave us in order to execute justice, to become vindictive and implacable, it is revenge by which men destroy one another. It is we who change into sin that which, in its proper measure, is the gift of God. There is anger in God Himself. We anger the divine nature. But the anger of God is never without a cause, and never exceeds the bounds of justice and mercy. Like the pure water in a clear vessel of glass, which may be suddenly agitated and then in a moment becomes calm and leaves no sediment behind, so if your anger be like this, it is anger rectified by wisdom. I might give many other examples, but these are enough.

Further: the gift of wisdom not only perfects the natural faculties of the soul, but it perfects also the infused supernatural virtues. It is necessary that wisdom should preside over the operations of faith, hope, and charity. We are told that those who believe are credulous and superstitious. I do not deny that credulity and superstition are parasites of faith.

Just as paralysis is a parasite of the human frame, so superstition is a parasite of faith. It is the morbid accident of a noble nature. I do not deny this : but superstition is faith without wisdom. Wisdom promptly and surely corrects both superstition and fanaticism. It corrects false notions of piety ; it opens the eyes of the soul to see how much of zeal, and extravagance, and self-choosing, and will-worship may enter into faith. Wisdom purifies faith. Once more, hope sometimes becomes presumption, sometimes indolence, until wisdom has come in to correct it. Again charity becomes prodigal, precipitate, unwise, contrary to prudence, and even contrary to justice, until wisdom purifies and tempers it, and, as the Holy Ghost says, impresses the law of order upon it, so that the first object of charity is God, and the next is a rational and wise love to ourselves, and the third a love to our neighbour. And as we ought to appreciate and prefer God before all things, that is, before our own life, so we ought to prefer the spiritual good of our neighbour even to our natural life ; but we ought never to prefer his spiritual life to our own, never to invert the order, never to think that we can do anything wrong in the hope of saving him, or that we can give up obedience for his sake. In this wisdom orders and corrects charity. And,

lastly, wisdom guards the union of the soul with God. Charity enters into wisdom, and gives to it a discernment by taste of divine things. Wisdom, therefore, unites the soul with God, because it produces in the soul the habit of recollection, a constant sense of the presence of God, a spiritual consciousness that His eye is upon us and that His ear is open. When God said to Abraham, 'Walk before Me and be perfect,' He gave him the highest rule of wisdom, and Abraham walking before God was walking in the gift of wisdom. He was encompassed by the divine presence. He saw all things in its light. He tasted in all things the sweetness of God. Wisdom therefore is the source of mental prayer. Isaac went out to meditate in the fields at eventide. Meditation is the patient thought of wisdom musing upon divine things. If you find it hard to meditate, you may know the reason. The gift of wisdom is in some way hindered. But this gift is not to be obtained by eager poring over books, nor by the stretch and strain of the imagination or of the intellect. It is a gentle and calm contemplation of God and His truth in the love of it. If you wish to learn the habit of meditation, unite your heart with God humbly and patiently, sitting, as it were, at the feet of God, and looking up into His face. Let us take the example, a saint,

and let us remember that the chief difference between you and the saints is a difference of degree. Do not for a moment say, 'To give me the examples of saints is to discourage me.' You cannot imitate their extraordinary actions, I admit; but their ordinary actions in walking before God in the path of sanctification, by which they ascended to their perfection, these you not only can but you must imitate. Take, for instance, Saint Charles. There never was a pastor of the Church who laboured harder and rested so little; there never was any one who was more incessantly at work for souls, who seemed never to take a moment for himself. No doubt people would have said, 'What an unspiritual man! When can he ever say his prayers? His life is a most commonplace life at the best. There is nothing in it supernatural or saintly.' He was indeed continually surrounded by men of business, by the clergy of his diocese, by the people who stood in need. When had such a man a moment to say his prayers? I may truly answer, there never was a moment when he ceased to pray. Filled, as he was, with the gift of wisdom in an eminent degree, his whole heart and mind were united to God with so close an intimacy, that his union with God was never suspended. Whatever he was doing he was always praying. Prayer and work

are so akin, that their double action need never interfere the one with the other. Let us take another example, Saint Philip Neri. For fifty years he never left Rome, save only when he went out of the walls to visit the Seven Churches, or to keep festival in some vineyard surrounded by Roman youths. He was all day long either in his chamber or in the church. He lived an unseen, unresting life for fifty years day and night, like the rising and the setting of the sun. We cannot tell when he prayed; but we know that he prayed always. What was it that sustained that wonderful perseverance of unremitting industry? What enabled him never to take a rest, never do anything that other men would think so necessary for their spiritual relaxation? Why did he never need it? Because he was always united with God; and in that union with God he had his lips to the fountain, from which he was always drawing refreshment and strength.

3. My last and third point shall be this: that wisdom is the foretaste of our eternal bliss. It is the last perfection of the soul, in its union with God. As I said in the beginning, the uncreated Wisdom of God was incarnate for us, and those in whom the Wisdom of God dwells are united with God in a special intimacy. It is the contact of the soul with God

during time in this world which unfolds hereafter into the beatific vision and the beatific union of eternity. The light by which God is seen now through faith will become the beatific vision. The love which tastes the sweetness of God here will hereafter become the beatific union. When the Psalmist says, 'O, taste and see how sweet the Lord is,' he calls us to the beginning of this twofold Bliss. And when Saint John says, 'You have the unction from the Holy One, and know all things, and you have no need that any man should teach you, but the unction which is in you teacheth you all things,' he is speaking of the unction of wisdom; for that Unction is the Holy Ghost Himself, and the wisdom which flows from Him is the anointing of the faithful. They who, by faith in a Divine Teacher, are united to the incarnate Wisdom of God, need no human teacher; they are under a Teacher Who came from God, that is, the Holy Ghost, perpetually speaking through His Church, guiding them infallibly in faith, bearing witness in their hearts, and preparing them to see Him as He is.

Wisdom is described in the Holy Scripture in this way. 'Wisdom, which is the worker of all things, taught me. For in her is the spirit of understanding: holy, one, manifold, subtil, eloquent,

active, undefiled, sure, sweet, loving that which is good, quick, which nothing hindereth, beneficent, gentle, kind, steadfast, assured, secure, having all power, overseeing all things, and containing all spirits, intelligible and pure. For Wisdom is more active than all active things, and reacheth everywhere by reason of her purity. For she is a vapour of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God; and therefore no defiled thing cometh into her. For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness. And being but one, she can do all things; and remaining in herself the same, she reneweth all things, and through nations conveyeth herself into holy souls; she maketh the friends of God and prophets. For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with Wisdom. For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it. For after this cometh night, but no evil can overcome wisdom.² Some men see God as in the twilight; and some men see Him as they see the sun under a cloud; and others, who have the gift of wisdom in them, see God as in the noon-day, neither in figure, nor form, nor outline, but by

² Wisdom vii. 21-30.

a spiritual consciousness which illuminates the whole soul ; and, when they so see God, then they understand these words of the Holy Ghost : ‘ The animal man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually examined.’ The light of the vision of God by faith gives to the intellect a supernatural discernment ; and not only a discernment by way of light, but a discernment by way of taste. That which comes from God has a sweetness, and that which comes from the world has a bitterness ; and those who have the gift of wisdom can detect and discern the one from the other. The gift of wisdom gives to the soul a special love for those things that God loves, and a special hatred for that which is hateful in His sight. It is intuitive and instinctive, before all reasoning, and of a supernatural sense.

The distinction between the gift of science and the gift of wisdom is this : in the gift of science we see God in His creatures, and we ascend up by His creatures to Himself ; but by the gift of wisdom we see God Himself, and, from the contemplation of His perfections, we descend to a knowledge of His works. And therefore it is that men who have the gift of wisdom in them are unintelligible to the

world. 'Therefore they know us not, because they knew Him not.'³ Therefore it is that those who have even the least of the gift of wisdom in them know the emptiness of all creatures in comparison with God. And in the measure in which they have this gift of wisdom, in that measure they are conformed to the mind of God Himself. It is wisdom that makes men 'the friends of God.' And His friends grow into His likeness. In the words of the Apostle: 'We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.'⁴

We see, then, what the gift of wisdom is, and with few words we will make an end. I said before, do not imagine that I have been describing the life of saints. I have been describing what your lives may be. You may all of you walk in that same path. You are all called to be saints, and if you press onward in humility, you shall ascend up to the glory of the saints before the Throne. There are some among us who have a greater facility in acquiring the gift of wisdom than others. And I will tell you who they are: the poor, whose state generates the spirit of poverty. It mortifies and casts out pride, which is

³ 1 S. John iii. 1.

⁴ 2 Cor. iii.

the great obstacle to wisdom. And next to the poor are little children fresh from the waters of baptism, whose souls have never yet been stained with sin; whose hearts, therefore, are not yet darkened. Does not this explain to us why it is the world counts us to be fools? Can there be anything more diametrically opposed the one to the other than the wise man and the worldly man? The wise man sets his whole soul, the eyes of his intellect, and the affections of his heart, upon God alone. As I said, the object of wisdom is God. And the worldly man sets his heart and his affections upon things that are out of God, and below God, and beneath God, and beside God, and contrary to God—for these things he lives and in these things he dies. Is there any wonder, then, that he should think us to be fools? Does he not explain the meaning of Holy Scripture, where we read: ‘We fools counted his life madness, and his end to be without honour; but how is he numbered among the children of God and his lot is among the saints’? These are the words of the worldly wise when it is too late: when their worldly wisdom, which is the love of wealth, and honour, and pride, with all this world which they worshipped, have passed away; when this animal or carnal wisdom of theirs—the love of pleasure, of sensu-

ality, and self-indulgence—have passed away for ever. When the diabolical wisdom of the men without the Holy Ghost, the arts and craft of pride, ambition, rivalry, jealousy, covetousness, and warfare, one with the other, are all stilled in the terrible silence of the Day of Judgment, then they will see the reason why fools counted the life of the just and wise to be madness and his end to be without honour. It must be so; for where there is wisdom there is detachment from creatures; and the wise man will put his foot upon the honour and the wealth of this world if it casts so much as a shadow between his soul and God. The gift of wisdom gives to the soul an attachment to God, and all things that relate to God and to our salvation. And more than this: it gives to the soul a love of the cross—the very thing from which all men shrink, ay, even some good men fear and fly from. It makes the wise man able to say what the Apostle said: ‘God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.’⁵ ‘With Christ I am nailed to the cross; nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and delivered Himself for

⁵ Gal. vi. 14.

me.’⁶ When the Wisdom of God came into the world He laid His hands upon a multitude of things—upon the sick, upon the afflicted, the hungry, the dying ; upon little children ; upon the bread which He blessed and brake in the wilderness ; upon sorrow and upon pain ; and, lastly, He laid them upon the cross ; and wherever He laid His hands He left a sweetness and a fragrance which wisdom can perceive and wisdom alone can know.

I will not stay to sum up ; but I will remind you of the path by which we have come upward to this gift of wisdom. We began by considering the working of the Holy Ghost in the soul, the nature of grace, which is the indwelling and action of the Holy Ghost in the heart by the gift of our regeneration, whereby we are made sons of God and receive His sanctifying grace : We went on to the theological virtues of faith, of hope, and of charity ; we then saw the sovereign grace of justification ; and after the grace of justification we came to the glory of sonship, and then to the seven gifts. We have tried to understand the nature of those seven gifts ; and how they are distinct from the virtues and graces implanted in baptism. We have gone over those seven gifts one by one, and we have seen that the gift of holy

⁶ Gal. ii. 19, 20.

fear is the gift of the children of God, and the gift of piety is the gift of the sons of God, and the gift of fortitude is the gift of the soldiers of Jesus Christ, and the gift of science is the gift of the disciples of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of counsel is the gift of the pastors of the flock, and the gift of intellect is the gift of the Doctors of the Church, and the gift of wisdom is the gift of the saints, among whom are numbered little children, and all who are faithful to the Spirit of God. There remain only two other subjects. I have tried to describe to you the work of the Spirit of God in the soul—which is like the growth of a tree from its root. We have reached at last the fulness of its stature and its spread, the symmetry and outlines of the Tree of Life, with its outreaching branches. I said before that wisdom is the blossom—I did not say it was the fruit, and for this reason: the Holy Ghost, writing by the Apostle in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, speaks of the fruits of the Holy Ghost, and numbers them as twelve. Afterwards come the Eight Beatitudes, which are the eight perfections of the soul of man in its highest and most intimate conformity with the mind and the life of Jesus Christ. I name them now in order to show you how the subject of the seven gifts has its

complement and its perfection in the Twelve Fruits and the Eight Beatitudes.

My object throughout has been to waken you and to warn you against subsiding into your natural character, to stir you up, if by God's help I can, to aim at a supernatural life and supernatural perfection. It has also been my aim, if possible, to make clear the distinction between an unspiritual man, in whom the gifts of the Holy Ghost are oppressed, and the spiritual man, who is under the guidance and the light of the Holy Ghost.

But all that I have tried to say may be summed up in these words of the Holy Ghost Himself: 'There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, hath condemned sin in the flesh, that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. For they that are according to the flesh mind the things that are of the flesh; but they that are according to the spirit mind the things that are of the spirit. For the wisdom of the flesh is

death ; but the wisdom of the spirit is life and peace. Because the wisdom of the flesh is an enemy to God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be. And they who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in you.' 'For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.'

' Rom. viii. 1-9, 14.

XV.

THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

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THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

The fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. GAL. v. 22.

OUR Lord speaks of these fruits of the Spirit in the parable of the true vine. He says, as you remember, 'I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman; and every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in Me, and I in you; except the branch abide in the vine it cannot bring forth fruit; without Me you can do nothing.'¹ That is to say, we are all of us, by our regeneration, grafted into Jesus Christ. As the branches are grafted into the stem of the tree, and derive from it their life, their sap, and their fruitfulness, so every soul that is 'born again of water and of the Holy Ghost,'² being inhabited by the Holy Spirit of God, lives by union with Jesus Christ and

¹ S. John xvi. 1-5.

² Ib. iii. 5.

bears these spiritual fruits. The Apostle counts up twelve fruits of the Spirit; and these constitute the active perfection of the Christian life. Besides the fruits of the Holy Ghost there are the Eight Beatitudes, which constitute the passive and final perfection of the Christian soul.

My purpose now is to speak of these fruits of the Holy Ghost.

There is a distinction to be drawn between the fruits of the Holy Ghost and the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and the Seven Gifts. As we have reason, and will, and love, which are the primary faculties of the natural soul, so we have faith, and hope, and charity, which may be called the faculties of the soul that is born again. But the fruits are distinct from these. The virtues are faculties or powers whereby we are capable of bearing these fruits. So again the gifts are distinct from these twelve fruits. For the gifts of the Holy Ghost are certain helps of the Holy Spirit given to assist us in the exercise of faith, hope, and charity. The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are not acquired by practice; they are infused into the soul. They are supernatural gifts which come from the Creator of all things, and by the help of His grace they are elicited into exercise, and they flow into the acts of faith, hope,

and charity. But the fruits of which I have spoken are therefore distinct from these seven gifts. What, then, are they? They are the ripe and full product of the vine, of the three great virtues and the gifts exercised together, producing certain actions in the spiritual life.³ Charity is the first of these fruits, and for this reason. There can be no graces, and no gifts, and no fruits in any soul that is not 'rooted in charity.'⁴ The soul must be rooted in the love of God and our neighbour, or it can bear no spiritual fruit. And the charity in which the soul is rooted pervades and runs through every gift and fruit, just as the sap from the root spreads through the stem and the branches into every fruit upon the vine.

We will now take for our subject this active perfection of the soul. Our Divine Lord has said: 'Every tree is known by its fruits: either make the tree good and the fruits good, or make the tree corrupt and the fruits corrupt'⁵—that is to say, be one thing or another. You cannot halt and hesitate between good and evil; if you be found in that middle state you will die eternally. 'The axe is laid to the root of

³ 'Fructus Spiritus est delectatio seu dulcedo in actu virtutis consistens, sed ipsa actio virtuosa, jucunda, ex gratia Spiritus Sancti procedens: et ex spiritu rationali elicita et producta.' Dionys. Carthusian. *Elem. Theol.* prop. clvi.

⁴ Eph. iii. 17.

⁵ S. Matt. xii. 33.

the tree. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.'⁶ You remember the parable of the barren fig-tree; how the lord of the vineyard came and turned over the leaves year after year, to find fruit upon the tree, on which he had bestowed so much care, and finding none, he said, 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'

Therefore it is a matter vital to us all to know whether or no we are bearing fruits to our Lord. If we are not bearing the fruits of the Spirit, we are bearing the fruits of the flesh; if we are not bearing the fruits of eternal life, we are bearing the fruits of eternal death. There is no middle state.

1. What then are the signs and the tests by which we shall know what fruits we are bearing? The fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, and all the twelve here named. See the fertility and the fruitfulness of the soul that is in a state of grace and therefore in the love of God. First of all, here is the relation of the soul with God Himself: charity is the love which unites us with God; joy, which means the thanksgiving and the consciousness of God's infinite goodness, in which we live and move; peace, whereby we are at rest with God, and in ourselves, and with all mankind. And secondly, there are the fruits which have

⁶ S. Matt. iii. 10.

⁷ S. Luke xiii. 7.

relation to our neighbour, and the first is patience. Do we bear with our neighbours? Are we irritable, revengeful, resentful, malicious? If so, the fruits of the Holy Ghost are not in us, because the benignity of God is not in us. Next comes goodness; as a fountain pours out pure water, so the good heart is perpetually pouring out goodness and diffusing goodness on all around. Longanimity is another name for patience. Just as equity is the most delicate form of justice, longanimity is the most perfect form of charity, the perpetual radiance of a loving heart which, in its dealings with all who are round about, looks kindly upon them and judges kindly of their faults. Longanimity means also perseverance, the not being wearied in well-doing, not throwing up and saying, 'I have tried to do good for such a one, I have tried to correct his faults, I have tried to win him; but he is ungrateful, he is incorrigible, and I will have no more to do with him.' Our Lord does not so deal with us. Longanimity means an unwearied perseverance in doing good. Faith means veracity, so that a man's word is as good as an oath. Mildness means gentleness, kindness, and forbearance, the dissembling of wrong, the absence of the fire of resentment and of the smouldering of ill-will. And then, lastly, there are certain fruits which have relation to ourselves.

They are, first of all, modesty, which is both within and without—modesty of bearing, modesty of conduct, of dress, of demeanour, a chastened and sensitive regard for others, in all that is due from us to them, which keeps us from obtrusiveness, and from transgressing the delicate consideration which is their right. There is also a modesty which means a moderation in the use of all things, the setting a bound and a limit even upon things that are lawful—‘All things to me are lawful, but all things are not expedient;’ and again, ‘All things edify not.’⁸ Continnence means most especially the repressing of passions—the passion of anger, the inclination to pleasure, to honour, to wealth, and to graver things which I need not name. Chastity is the transparent purity of the soul and the custody of the senses, because they are the avenues to the soul by which sin enters.

Such, then, in few words, are the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost. And every soul that is in the grace of God has in it this fertility. It may not bear them all in equal measure, but it bears them all in some proportion.

2. Then, secondly, see the variety of these fruits. The description that the Apostle gives of the life of

⁸ 1 Cor. vi. 12, x. 23.

our Divine Lord when He was upon earth is this: 'He went about doing good:'⁹ that is, the life of our Lord in this world was spent from first to last in doing good to others; in bearing everywhere and towards all men a loving heart. His hands were always executing the promptings of His Sacred Heart. And His Sacred Heart He bequeathed to His Church, which is His mystical Body. The vibration and the pulsation of that Heart of love are felt throughout Christendom. In every work of all good Christians the Sacred Heart is the animating and quickening principle of charity.

Look at the world before the Son of God came into it. Find one institute of mercy in it. Find a hospital, or an asylum for the widow or for the orphan. Find a home for those who were bereft of reason. Find a ministry of charity to the sick. The culture of classical nations was as cold as the ice, as hard as a stone. The Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Son of God cast fire upon the earth. And the Christian world kindled and broke forth into all the works of charity. As soon as the widows and the orphans among those that believed were known to be destitute, the Apostles set apart a special order—the sacred order of Deacons—to be the ministers of the charity

⁹ Acts x. 38.

of Jesus Christ to His poor. The law of alms came in, which had no existence in the heathen world. The life of community—not the communism of those that do not believe in Jesus Christ, but the community of all things among those who, being members of His Body, have a sympathy one with another, and share in each other's sorrows and joys, and in their hunger, and thirst, and nakedness. The miseries of mankind as they were seen by the Son of God Himself are before the eyes of His Church. All the miseries of mankind, of body and soul, are open to the heart that is illuminated and kindled with the love of God and our neighbour. The Church from the beginning has shown an inventiveness of charity, in finding out how it may apply the help of the love and of the mercies of God to every form of human suffering.

And what the Church does as a body the saints of the Church have done one by one. The life of Saint Charles, the great pastor of Milan, was inexhaustible in compassion. Saint Vincent of Paul, who did not commence his works of mercy until he was forty years of age, has filled the whole world with the exercise of the most various forms of Christian love, ministering to every form of distress and suffering. And what there is in the lives of saints there ought to be in its measure in every one of you. Do

not say, 'I have a preference for this or for that kind of charity, and I am not called to other things.' You are called to show all these fruits of the Holy Ghost on every occasion in which it is possible, at least in some measure or in some degree, and that to all.

3. And then, thirdly, where these fruits are there is a growing facility in doing them. Just as the fruit on the vine ripens by a law common to all the growths of nature—which begin in the summer, are made perfect in the autumn, and when they are mellow and full they drop into the hands of those that gather them—so is it with the fruits of the Holy Ghost; there is in the heart of every one who lives in the love of God and his neighbour a certain facility of doing and being all that these fruits describe. And yet we all know too well that we constantly have a repugnance to doing any duty if it be difficult; to persevere in anything is always a trial to our patience; we make excuses, and we say, 'It is very hard; I cannot do it, or I cannot bear it, or I cannot go on with it.' What does this prove? That we are not faithful to the Spirit of God Who is in us, helping us; that we are not faithful to the light and the love which is prompting us with all the motives of charity to God and to our neighbour.

And this facility in doing right, from what does it

spring ? Chiefly from three things. First, from an appreciation of God, above all things ; from a knowledge of God's love, of God's goodness, of the reward which is laid up for us, that is, God Himself, Who will give Himself to those who bear the fruits of the Holy Ghost in His service. They who have an appreciation of God have in them a motive power which will carry them over every obstacle, through every opposition. It is the want of this appreciation of God which makes us so feeble and so faint-hearted, as we all are, in doing what is right. We are ready to sell our Lord for thirty pieces of silver, when the gain of this world comes across us, or for the enjoyment of a little pleasure, when it allures us. Therefore we say that duties are hard, because we have not in us this strong mainspring which would carry us through all repugnance and over all difficulties which bar our way.

Secondly, it springs from the love of the Sacred Heart. If we loved the Sacred Heart of Jesus as the source of all our strength and all our hope, if we loved our Lord with a love that is generous as His love to us, and self-denying as His, then there is not one of our hardest duties that we should not do with a promptness and an energy which would overcome all resistance.

And thirdly, it springs from the love of our neighbour. If we really love our neighbour as ourselves—if we have, first of all, a rational love of ourselves, that is, if we know the value of our own soul, and if we are ready to sacrifice everything in the world that we may be saved—then we shall be ready to do all things for our neighbour, just as we shall be ready to do them for ourselves. We read in the life of a true saint, though he is not yet canonised, a layman, not a priest—that he spent his time in visiting the hospitals in France, and that, as he was hanging over the beds of the sick and the dying, even the most repulsive, he used to be heard whispering to himself, ‘O my Lord, what can I do for Thee? how can I serve Thee?’ And then speaking to the sick and dying as if they were Jesus Christ Himself, as seeing his Divine Master in them, he would say, ‘What do you desire of me? O Lord, tell me what it is.’ This it was that carried him through all the repugnance of nature and the repulsiveness of disease.

4. And where there is this facility there is a great sweetness; and, as I began by saying, in the fruits of the Holy Ghost there is a special sweetness or delight mingled with every act that is prompted by the Holy Spirit of God. To do right by the power of grace has in it a sweetness of its own. We know

that everything we do with facility we do gladly; everything we do with difficulty is wearisome to us. To learn a new language is a wearisome task, until we can read it, and speak it, and pronounce it. Then, with the facility to do these things, comes a certain sweetness in the exercise of what we have acquired. In learning to play upon a musical instrument, the weary inaptitude of the hand and ear, until they have acquired skill, makes the learning irksome and distasteful; but as soon as the difficulty is overcome, the exercise of what we have acquired has a sweetness in itself. So it is in the service of God. And if, when we are called to any duty howsoever hard, we could only say, 'O my Lord, I do this for Thee; it is for Thee I am doing it, not for myself, not for any human friend, but for my Divine Master; for Thy sake I do it;' or when we are called to any trial or any pain, if we could say, 'O my Lord, it is for Thee I suffer it; I know it is Thy will; therefore for Thy sake I will bear it; and I know that Thou knowest all my motives, Thou art looking on, Thou art listening, Thou knowest all things,'—if we only had this consciousness, then whatsoever comes it would be sweet. And besides, whenever any one does an act of duty, there is another sweetness which God Himself will pour out secretly

into the heart. We cannot reason about it. But if any one has ever, faithfully and for the love of Jesus Christ, done or suffered anything, he will know that there is a gentle rain of sweetness which comes down in secret upon the heart: as the Psalmist says, ‘How great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee.’¹⁰

5. And then, lastly, in this consists the active perfection of the soul. I say the active perfection, because there is a passive perfection, which does not belong to our present thoughts. The example of Jesus Christ upon the Cross is the example of passive perfection or perfect obedience in perfect patience. But what I have tried to describe is the perfection of active charity. And that perfection consists chiefly not in what we do externally: nor in any outward actions. Just as the essential malice of sin is not in the outward act. It is not in the lifting the hand to take the life of a fellow-creature, it is in the malicious and murderous intention which lifts the hand, that the sin of murder lies—so also it is with perfection. Perfection is not in the giving of alms—it is in the motive with which we give them. The least things done for the love of our Divine Master may be full in His sight of the richest and

¹⁰ Psalm xxx. 20.

the sweetest merit, and the greatest things we may do or suffer, if they are not done in charity, are, as the Apostle says, worth nothing : all these things, even martyrdom, are as nothing unless they spring from the constraining love of Jesus in the heart. And therefore, where these fruits of the Holy Ghost are found, the heart will be loving, compassionate, gentle, kind, forgiving. The first promptings of the thoughts, before they have become deliberate, the very first movements, as it were, which are raised by the conduct of others, will be kindly and charitable; much more so our deliberate thoughts, when we have had a moment to reflect; and such will be therefore the whole habit of the mind. And if the thoughts are such, so will the motives be : the motives which govern the whole life will be motives of love, of charity, of mercy, of pity, of compassion; and where there are these motives and thoughts of charity there will be desires, large and ardent, which may never be fulfilled, because we have not the power to accomplish them. Every day, in the Lord's Prayer, we say, 'Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;' we open our hearts with desires as wide as the world and as lasting as eternity. And where the Spirit of God dwells in the heart there is this fruitfulness of desire. The heart

will desire things that are as high as heaven. I ask, then, have you this fervent longing for the service of God in you? Have you in your heart an ardent desire to bear the Cross, if need be, in His service? Can you say, 'The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up'?¹¹ Can you say in the time of duty, 'Behold, I come'?¹² Can you say, as the Apostle did, 'I will most gladly spend, and be spent myself, for your souls,' for the service of my Lord and for the elect for whom He died?

I have described to you what are the fruits of the Holy Ghost, what are their motives, and from what they spring.

Now there are two plain conclusions to be drawn.

1. The one is this: the danger of the barren soul—of the soul that is bearing no fruit. Remember the words of the master of the vineyard. He planted the fig-tree, he had cultured it, he had dug about it, he had manured it, he had tended it, and appointed one to watch over it. It bore no fruit, and it was cut down. How has God dealt with you? He has given His own Son to die for you, and the Eternal Son of God Incarnate has shed His Precious Blood for you. And God has given the Holy Ghost to you; and the Holy Ghost has dwelt in your heart,

¹¹ S. John ii. 17. ¹² Psalm xxxix. 8; Heb. x. 7.

and He is in your heart at this moment if you be in a state of grace. If so, what are the rights of God over you? May He not come and look into your hearts for the fruits of innocence? May He not say, 'I gave to your soul the graces of baptism and the innocence of a child of God—where are they? I gave to your soul the graces of the Holy Ghost, that you might live according to justice—where are the fruits of justice? I have given to your soul the grace of contrition, that you might repent—where are the fruits of penance? I have given to your soul the grace to know My love, to feel the love that I have for you—where is the return of love for love, where is your generosity? I have heaped upon your soul mercies without number, poured out upon it blessings beyond the heart of man to conceive—where is your spirit of thanksgiving or of praise?' These are the rights that God has over you. He may justly expect these things from you. See, then, the disappointment of God. He comes and He finds upon many and many a soul no fruit at all—plenty of leaves, a profusion of show, of fair outward appearance, but no fruit. On others he finds a little fruit, a scanty fruit. After all the abundance of His graces, after all the sunshine, and all the showers, and all the culture that ought to have made us to be saints, He comes and He finds here and

there only a scanty fruit; and even that scanty fruit is often vapid and tasteless, because it is borne by constraint, and without love, or generosity, or a pure motive. Or He comes and He finds upon a soul that has been born again and was once inhabited by the Holy Ghost the fruits of the flesh—envy, jealousy, hatred, schism, dissension, revelling, drunkenness, all manner of fruits of the flesh, and of the world, and of death. Is not God, then, justly disappointed? And is not our unworthiness incredible, even to our own human hearts? That after all His mercies, and graces, and long-suffering, and invitations, and rebukes, and chastisements, we should bear the fruits of the flesh and not the fruits of the Spirit. But there has been a voice that has been saying, ‘Lord, leave it alone this year also;’ and we have been spared from year to year, through the intercession of our guardian angel and of our Blessed and Immaculate Mother.

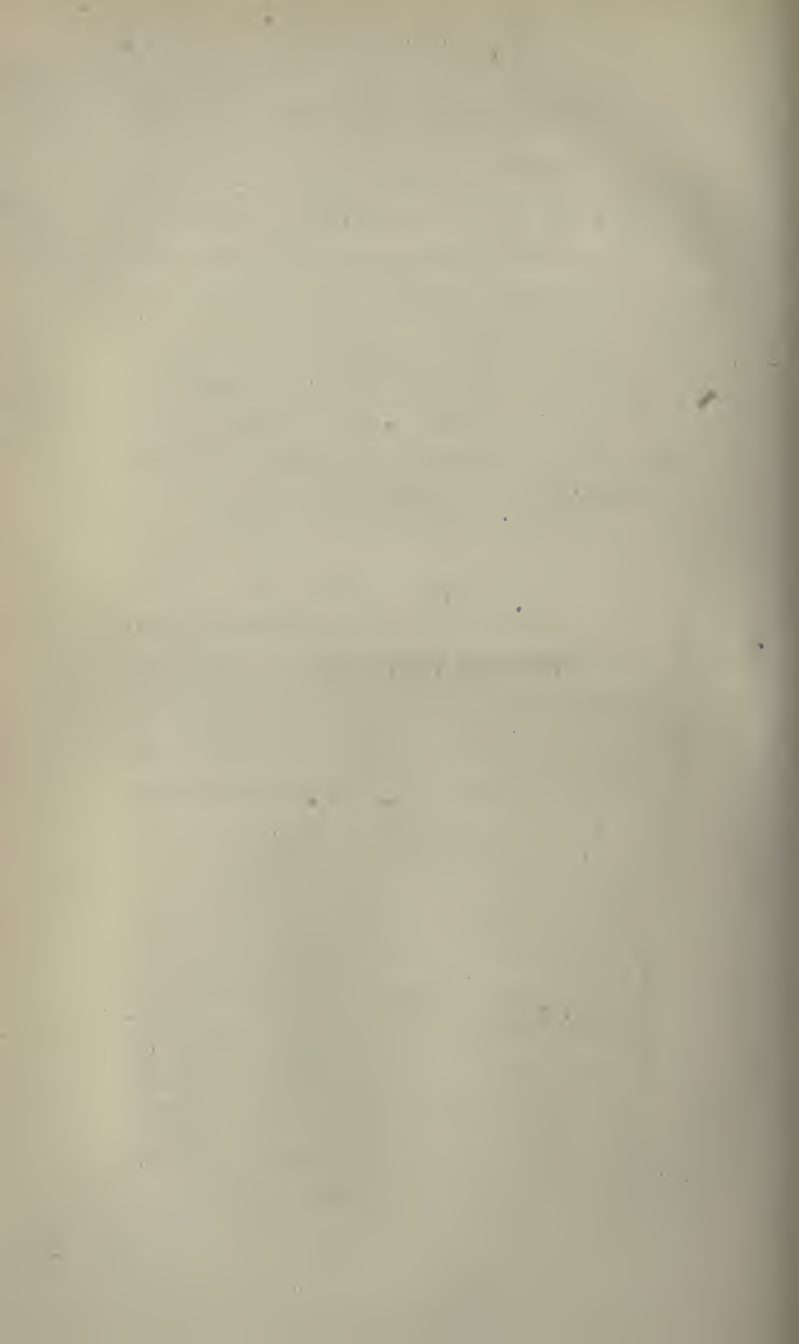
2. And, lastly, dear brethren, see the sweetness of bearing these fruits and the greatness of the reward. There is a reward even in this life. The love and the blessing of God follow those who bear the fruits of the Spirit all their life long. The multitude of that sweetness comes down upon them every year, and every day, and every hour, and sets its token upon

them by the manifestation of His love in the secret outpourings of His peace and joy into their hearts. And even from men, from those among whom they have lived, passing to and fro, and ministering to their sorrows and sicknesses in soul and body, what love, what gratitude, what thanksgiving, what sympathy, what prayers do they who are loving and kindly receive. This is the reward on earth. But there is a sweeter reward hereafter. God Himself is 'the exceeding great reward'¹³ to all who love and serve Him. And according to the measure of the charity we have exercised here will be our glory and our bliss hereafter; measured with the most precise and the most just distribution will be the glory and the bliss of eternal life to all those who have here borne, in any measure, the fruits of the Holy Ghost.

¹³ Gen. xv. 1.

XVI.

THE BEATITUDES.



THE BEATITUDES.

And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain ; and when He was sat down, His disciples came to Him. And opening His mouth He taught them. S. MATT. v. 1, 2.

IT was then that Jesus spoke the Sermon on the Mount, which has changed the desert of this world into the garden of the Lord. And this gives us the only other meditation we have to make on the beautiful and divine work of our sanctification : that is to say, on the Eight Beatitudes. We have already seen how the fruits of the Holy Ghost grow upon the soul as upon a tree planted in the waters of Baptism. We have seen that they are the acts, internal and external, of the love of God and our neighbour, of great fertility, and variety, and facility, and sweetness. They constitute the active perfection of the soul ; for ‘ charity is the bond of perfection.’ All other graces come and go with charity, and where charity is the soul has the full outline of its original. The life of Jesus

is the pattern of all perfection. He was all day long pouring out the words and doing the works of charity. The ardour of the Sacred Heart had no rest in doing good. It was His thought from morning to night. All the day long He was healing, absolving, saving the souls of men. But the perfection of the Son of God was not in His active works alone. He was made perfect through suffering. Obedience is perfected in patience. Jesus revealed the perfection of the Sacred Heart always and everywhere, but nowhere, and at no time, as in the three hours' agony on the Cross. There His deified will was crucified—there His heart and mind were conformed to God by the last conformity of self-oblation and of suffering unto death. Therefore the Church venerates, above all, her martyred children. They are made perfect in their passion, and ascend at once to the kingdom of their crucified Lord.

We have therefore distinguished perfection, not into two kinds, but into two degrees, the active and the passive. The active perfection is the perfection of the fruits of the Holy Ghost ; the passive is the perfection of the Beatitudes.

Now the Beatitudes are acts of a more excellent and heroic degree ; and in the doing of them the soul is not only preparing itself for its eternal bliss, but it

already has a foretaste of its future beatitude.¹ Therefore such acts are called Beatitudes because they beatify the soul even here in this life of warfare. They constitute also the highest perfections of the saints—the closest conformity to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The Beatitudes are eight in number. They describe eight kinds of perfection by which the soul tastes of its eternal sweetness. They are poverty of spirit, meekness, holy sorrow, hunger and thirst for God, mercifulness, cleanness of heart, peacemaking among men, patience under persecution. We have here the image of Jesus Christ from Bethlehem to Calvary. Perfection begins in the stable, and is finished upon the Cross; and all along the way of perfection the children of the Beatitudes are known, not only for their active charity, which is the sap and strength of the twelve fruits of the Spirit, but by a gentle and passive charity, which unites them, I may say, visibly with God; for no man could do the things they do except God were with him.

¹ 'Beatitudo viæ est dispositio, inchoatio, meritum atque præambulum beatitudinis patriæ, ad quam ascenditur itur ac pervenitur per octo beatitudines viæ. * * * * *

'Beatitudines istæ sunt actus virtutum et ut videtur quibusdam sunt actus excellentium præsertim heroicarum virtutum, cum beatitudo sit operatio optima.' Dion. Carth. *Elem. Theol.* prop. civ. tom. i.

Some, indeed, teach that the Beatitudes are heroic acts of virtue ; others, that every act in these eight kinds, inasmuch as it beatifies the soul in some measure, is also a Beatitude. This, no doubt, is true in itself. But these two ways of speaking run up at last into one. When we say that any man is meek or a peacemaker, we mean that meekness and the love of peace are so dominant in his character that they describe it ; that is to say, he is visibly, sensibly, and characteristically meek. It is so also that we speak of the Beatitudes. They are acts of the same kind as those which we do every day, but in such a degree and ripeness as to become marks or notes of a character, and to bring a special sweetness into the soul. And I may say that they are the last finishing touches by which the Holy Spirit of God completes His perfect will in us—that is, our perfection. I will therefore, to wind up our subject, try to show—first, what perfection is ; secondly, who are called to it ; and, thirdly, what are the means of attaining it.

1. First, as to what perfection is. It is not to be without sin, for then there would have been none perfect in this world except Jesus and His Blessed Mother, Joseph, John Baptist, the Beloved Disciple, Jeremias the Prophet, and any others who may have been preserved from all sin. The perfection we speak

of is the state of sanctification to which such as we are may attain in this life. Now any Christian who exactly fulfils in his acts, and by the exercise of virtues, the obligations of a son of God, is called perfect. This is the meaning of our Lord's words, 'Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.' He explains this. 'Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you.' For God 'maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad; and raineth upon the just and the unjust.'² Our Lord here takes the equal and unalterable goodness of God as the pattern and law of our perfection. So, also, when Saint Paul says to the Corinthians, 'Rejoice; be perfect.'³ Again, when Saint James says, 'If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.'⁴

In the Sacrament of Confirmation we are made 'perfect Christians;' that is, all needful grace is given to do and to suffer all that is needed to the active and passive perfection of a son of God and of a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

In a word, perfection consists in charity; for charity is the perfection of God, and is therefore the perfection of the soul. Charity is the bond of the soul with God, and the indwelling of God in us. Charity

² S. Matt. v. 48, 44-45.

³ 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

⁴ S. James iii. 2.

is the perfection of faith and hope, and will be perfect when they are passed away. Charity is also the measure of our bliss, and bliss itself. It is, therefore, perfection both *in via* and *in patria*, both here in our way to the heavenly country and hereafter in the eternal home. Charity, then, is personal perfection, as distinct from what is called instrumental perfection—the state and means by which it may be attained. There are also many degrees of perfection ; there is the perfection of children, and of youths, and of men. Saint John says, ‘ I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for His name’s sake. I write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him Who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one.’⁵

This describes the three states of those who are beginning, those who are advancing, and those who have attained. Each state has its proportionate perfection. There is, lastly, the perfection of those who are being made perfect and the perfection of those who have attained perfection. There is also a distinction between a just man, and a holy man, and a perfect man. A just man fulfils the law, and gives to every man his due ; a holy man is specially united with God ; a perfect man is both.

⁵ 1 S. John ii. 12, 13.

Now we will keep our thoughts upon this last, as it completes the outline of all we have been saying of the work of the Holy Ghost in us.

We have been tracing out this supernatural work from its first beginning in our regeneration, when the graces of the Holy Spirit were infused into us in our unconscious infancy. They were so given as to abide as habits or inherent powers, inclining and enabling us to believe, to hope, and to love. As faith unfolds from a mere potentiality into actual belief, the intellect grows into conformity with the truth; and because the truth is the revelation of the mind of God, the intellect is conformed to the divine intelligence. Faith believes the whole revelation of God explicitly so far as it knows it; implicitly so far as it is not known as yet. And faith gives to hope its object and its motive, and sustains it with the evidence of things not seen. As faith enlarges, hope strengthens; and as faith and hope illuminate and strengthen the soul, it loves the created and uncreated truth. Charity grows broader in extension and more ardent in intensity as faith gives more light to see the beauty and the bliss of God. Such is the first outline and principle of our union with God. But with these virtues we received sanctifying grace; that is, the indwelling and operation of the Holy

Ghost, imparting to us His sanctity, as the sun gives its light and warmth to all things. As this sanctifying grace grows in the heart, the intellect and will are conformed to the intelligence and will of God; and this growing conformity prepares both for the operation of the seven gifts. Then holy fear, and piety, and fortitude control, and soften, and strengthen the will; and knowledge and counsel form the practical reason or conscience; and understanding and wisdom enlarge the head and the heart, and unite both with God. Such is the growth of our sanctification; and such a man may be called a just man, and holy, and wise. But as yet he may not have entered into the region of perfection. There may still be flaws and dents in the heart, mists in the intelligence, twists and crookedness in the will. There may be the roots of many faults yet alive; habitual faults and deliberate venial sins. The complete circle of charity and of its fertility is not yet expanded. There may be no great self-denial, or generosity, or fervour. Such a man may still seek his own things, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's. He keeps the commandments, but not the counsels. He does many good things, but he does not spend himself, nor is he willing to be spent for the elect's sake. We say of such men that they are not large hearted; they

have no ready sympathy with their neighbours. There is something upright indeed, but wooden, as we say, and dry in all their contacts with mankind. Such men are good men, but not perfect. They need the glad promptness of charity, the fruitfulness in good works, the inventiveness, the facility to listen, to respond, to venture, to undertake the dictates of charity. When they grow up into this region of their conversion to God, which may be called the early summer, when blossoms fall off and fruits are set, then they enter within the circle of active perfection, and multiply the fruits of the Spirit. And yet this is not all. They have not attained, nor are they already perfect.⁶ They have to learn a harder lesson. Active works, even though they be with self-denial and hardship, elicit the energies of nature, which are so like the operations of the Spirit, that they are easily mistaken for them. The Pharisees drilled themselves with a human force of will and precision of conscience which looked like perfection, and yet they were whited sepulchres after all. The giving of alms, and blowing of trumpets, and prayer at the corners of the streets were in many altogether, and in many more in part, only human acts from human motives, and for human ends. They loved the praise of men, they received

⁶ Phil. iii. 12.

glory one of another. Therefore Saint Paul, by the light of the Holy Ghost, draws out the charity of God with a divine insight and delineation: 'If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'⁷ I have repeated the whole of these divine words to bring out that they begin with patience and end with endurance. The whole delineation is a counterpart of the Beatitudes. It shows us an inward region of the passive perfection of the soul; a higher circle of the path which winds round the mountain near to its summit, at a height where clouds and storms begin to meet

⁷ 1 Cor. xiii. 1-7.

us, and the darkness of Calvary may not be far off. Along the early path, from the waters of Baptism, the soul is united with God in the light and the sunshine, and along the trodden path of faith, where the morning and the evening have their twilight; but there is no night there. This is the clear and conscious union of the soul with God; the support and reward of those who are beginning, and even of those who are far advanced. But there is another world to be entered, in which spiritual trials multiply, with a growing consciousness of the unapproachable sanctity of God, and therefore of personal sinfulness; reviving temptations, old enemies, new antagonists, crosses from bad men; worse than this, crosses from good men; dryness and darkness of heart. God seems to be nowhere. The earth is empty and void; everything goes wrong; nothing prospers that is good; all seems to prosper that is evil.

Here is a realm which seems to be the home of those whom God has forgotten; where His face is never seen, nor a ray of His light ever shines. Let us now read over the Beatitudes: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit;' 'Blessed are they that mourn;' 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst;' 'Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you for justice' sake.' This is a region not so much of active charity as of

passive endurance. There is hardly light enough to work by, but we can suffer in the dark. It is here that faith holds fast like an anchor out of sight : deep down where no eye can reach. Hope says, ' Though He kill me, yet will I trust in Him ; ' and Charity, ' Lord, Thou knowest all things ; Thou knowest that I love Thee ; ' and contrition turns into compunction, and prayer into ' Father, if it be possible, ' once and again ; the same words because no others come. This is a stage in the journey which must be passed by those that are perfect. They are learning to suffer without and within : from the world, from enemies, from friends, from Satan, from themselves. They are learning to be patient as their Divine Master ; gentle to all, even the most unworthy ; generous to the ungrateful ; thankful under the cross ; and their will in perfect submission to the will of God.

I am not describing canonised saints, but Christians such as we may be. There are perhaps no miracles in such a life. But it is a true personal perfection, and the last conformity we shall bear, perhaps, to our Master's will.

Nevertheless, in such a state there may yet be venial sins, and there are yet in the heart movements which are still turbulent against the will, and in the will itself infirmity. But there is no deliberate

affection to anything contrary to the will of God. Temptations resisted are not sins ; and the indeliberate adhesion of the mind to that which is deliberately resisted is not a transgression of the law. And such souls are among the perfect. ‘The Lord knoweth who are His.’⁸

2. Next, who are they that are called to perfection ? We are all called to be saints. We are, therefore, all called to be perfect. All that are saved must be made perfect before they can see the face of God. But all are not called to the same perfection, nor to the same degree of perfection, nor by the same way. As in the kingdom of bliss there are many mansions, so in this order of grace there are many ministrations of the Spirit of God. One He called to be His own Mother ; another to be her Guardian ; another to be the forerunner of the Incarnate Word. Twelve were called to be Apostles ; one to be the foundation and head of His Church, one to lie upon His bosom, and one was a devil. As no two among them were alike, so neither is there identity or equality among the members of His Body. All are called, but not all to the same office, or grace, or reward. All have their vocation. Not one is left all the day idle. And all shall have their wages when the evening is come.

⁸ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

In one thing they will be all alike. They will all receive of the free sovereign gift of God—eternal life. But they will not all have the same grace here nor the same glory in heaven. All shall be full of bliss, but there are orders and degrees of beatitude.

First, therefore, every one that is born of water and of the Holy Ghost is called to go onward, from faith, hope, charity, sanctifying grace, the seven gifts, the twelve fruits, to the foot of the Cross. Not all in equal measure ; but all in some measure. And God alone knows in what measure to mete out His grace to each one of us. Three things are certain : first, that He gives us an exceeding abundance of grace ; secondly, that we do not correspond with more than a part of the grace He pours so largely on us ; and, thirdly, that we might all attain to a greater perfection than we do.

The essential perfection of the soul is the love of God and our neighbour. Who is there that has attained in this to what he might ? What perfection of charity is there that we might not attain ? And whose fault is it if we do not ? We are not straitened in Him, but in ourselves. The Holy Ghost pervades the whole Church of God with His sanctifying grace. Therefore it has the note of

sanctity. With every living member He is perpetually present, not only in the holy Sacraments, but everywhere, and always, and in every action of life. There is no perfection of charity, humility, poverty of spirit we may not attain. All of you living in the world, in trade and business, in the cares and works of home, you may all be united with God in a close and constant union; and with your lips to the fountain may draw from Him the perfection of charity. We do not realise our vocation to be sons of God; and that, as I have already and often said, because we are not spiritual. It is a snare and an illusion to hanker after states which are not our own, and circumstances which can never be ours. Here and now, where we are, we may attain to humility, and through humility charity will be made perfect. A father of the desert was one day asked in vision whether he would desire to see a soul more perfect than himself. He was carried to a poor home where he saw a mother toiling for her children. It was a humble likeness of the Holy House, and under that roof were cares, anxieties, weariness, privations, labour, self-denials, glad submission of will, tenderness of affection, pity, and service, and filial piety to God. These things are a discipline of perfection, which subdue the heart and keep it humble

before God and man. And humility is the mind and perfection of Jesus Christ. This applies to every state in life: from kings' courts to the streets of the cities, and to the hamlets and solitary dwellings of the poor. Every state and trade, every condition of wealth or poverty, lettered or unlettered, diverse in all other things, are all alike in this: 'God is charity; and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him;' and charity is perfection.

Nevertheless, there are some who are called to perfection here and now. Our Lord called His Apostles to be 'the light of the world,' and 'the salt of the earth;' that is, to make other men perfect. If so, they were called to be perfect themselves. He called also all those whom they consecrated to be priests by that very action to be perfect too. The priesthood was created to guard and to transmit in a living example the perfection of their Master. Priests share His office and jurisdiction; they consecrate and distribute His Body and His Blood; they judge sinners, binding and loosing in His name. They are His witnesses; they represent Him; they are to be His living likeness, that men, in seeing them, may see Him, or in hearing them may hear His voice. Therefore every saint of the Church has spoken with holy fear of the office of a priest. 'They ought to

have a mind purer than the rays of the sun ;⁹ and ‘ a hand purer than its light.’ Priests are called ‘ the holier members of the body ;’¹⁰ ‘ the saviours of the world ;’¹¹ ‘ the kinsmen of Christ ;’¹² ‘ the gates of the eternal city, through whom all who believe in Christ enter into Christ ;’¹³ ‘ the documents and example of life ;’¹⁴ ‘ fellow-helpers of God ;’¹⁵ ‘ the fellow-servants and companions of angels.’¹⁶

But there is no language which can express the dignity of a priest. He is ‘ Alter Christus.’ Therefore, what measure is there of the perfection he ought to have obtained? Saint Alphonsus says : ‘ Mere sanctifying grace is by no means enough for the receiving of sacred orders ; but beyond this interior perfection is required, as the common consent of all the holy Fathers and Doctors with one mouth demands.’¹⁷ Saint Thomas says ‘ that priests serve Christ Himself in the Sacrament of the Altar ; for which greater interior sanctity is required than the state of religion requires.’¹⁸ Again he says, ‘ They who are engaged

⁹ S. Joan Chrys. *De Sacerdotio*, lib. vi. c. 4.

¹⁰ S. Pet. Dam. *Contra Cleric. Intemp.* d. i. c. 7.

¹¹ S. Hieron. *in Abd.* v. 21. ¹² S. Bern. *Ad Past. in Synodo.*

¹³ S. Prosper. lib. ii. 2, *De Vita Contempl. Sacerd.*

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 1 Cor. iii. 9.

¹⁶ S. Pet. Dam. *De com. vita Canon.* cap. 4.

¹⁷ *Concil. Prov. Westm.* IV. Dec. xii. 1, 2, 3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

in the divine ministry acquire a royal dignity, and in virtue ought to be perfect.'¹⁹ And the Church, in ordaining its priests, says that our Lord has shown by word and deed that the ministers of His Church ought to be perfect in faith and action ; that is, in the twofold love of God and their neighbour.²⁰ 'They are chosen out, set apart, and sanctified for this very end, that they may make others perfect ; and that not so much by word as by deed. The best preaching is the priest's life. If he go before his flock in all spiritual perfection, in faith, hope, charity, sanctity, the seven gifts, the twelve fruits, the eight beatitudes, they will follow him. They will be followers of him as he is also of Christ.' They will be insensibly drawn, subdued, changed, assimilated to his mind and will ; and therefore to the mind and will of Jesus. Blessed is such a priest ; the guardian of the Most Holy Sacrament, the friend of his Lord.

3. Lastly, what are the means of attaining this perfection ?

First, and above all, obedience to the commandments of God is necessary. Without this no man will ever reach to it. 'The law is not made for the just man,' because he is a law to himself. He has it written on his heart. Saint Augustine says: 'Love

¹⁹ *Concil. Prov. Westm. IV. Dec. ii. 1, 2, 3.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

God, and do what you will.' To deviate from the law of God, even in one point, is to turn away from perfection. It is a swerving from our eternal end; and if we fail of this, or if our will be bent on anything aside of or below this, we are out of the way, not only of perfection, but of life.

Next, obedience to the precepts and to the authority of the Church. The ultimate and certain test whereby to know whether we are in the way of perfection is perfect conformity to the mind of the Church. I say to the mind, because it is not enough to believe all dogmas and to submit to all discipline. Many do this in whom the spirit of pride, singularity, criticism, and self-choosing are dominant. The mind of the Church is known not only by Pontiffs and Councils, but by the mind of the saints, by the traditions of piety, and by customs of approved or permitted devotion.

Then, again, obedience to the authority of parents for the young; and the authority of pastors for all.

But after these, and with these at all times, the holy Sacraments are the chief means of receiving from God the grace of interior perfection.

There can be no interior perfection without purity of conscience; and the chief means of purifying the conscience is the Sacrament of Penance, whereby the

habit of self-examination and of circumspection is maintained, and the grace of contrition and of self-knowledge is continually increased.

Next, there can be no interior perfection without cleanness of heart; but the chief sanctification of the heart comes from communion in the Body and Blood of our Divine Master; in the indwelling of His Sacred Heart in us, and in the impression of His deified soul upon all the affections of our own.

Beyond this are the counsels of perfection, as they are called. The life of chastity, by which not only the priest and the religious, both men and women, but also many who are not called either to the priesthood or to a convent, sanctify themselves in soul and body in the world. It is sometimes thought, and even incautiously said, that a man or a woman ought either to become a priest or nun, or else to marry. This is a saying which has no warrant from the Church. There are many men who have no call to do either; and many women who have neither vocation, nor fitness, nor inclination, either for a convent or for a married life. The Holy Ghost has not laid down this alternative. He has left this liberty now as it was in the beginning. The life of counsels is for everybody. The life of priests or nuns is only for those who are called to

such a state. It is a rash way of talking to imply that the life of counsels is the privilege of priests and nuns. It is offered to all. The eight Beatitudes imply that the life of counsels is open to every one, though they do not necessarily impose it. There have been, and there are, multitudes living and dying in the world who have sat at our Lord's feet without distraction, and have espoused themselves to Him with a perfect and inviolate fidelity. Care and prudence no doubt are needed, both in their directors and in themselves, that they may not rashly engage in a life which is above them; also, that, having entered it, they walk through it, not in the letter only, but in the spirit; and that in all the accessories and surroundings of their life they watch to keep their hearts in the liberty and the light of our Lord's service.

They that are called either to the priesthood or to the cloister enter at once, and openly before the world, into the life of counsels. Chastity, poverty, and obedience are the threefold cord which binds them to the crucified life of our Lord.

In the cloister it is confirmed by a threefold vow, which constitutes the state or way of perfection as a means to its attainment. In the priesthood the law of chastity is imposed with the yoke of Jesus, when the hands of the bishop are laid upon the head of the

priest. In that hour also he promises obedience to the successor of the Apostle who has consecrated him to the service of the altar. The state of poverty is happily now his inevitable lot. The Church has returned into its primitive poverty, at least here in England; and everywhere the world is doing us the service of binding together pastors and people by the generous interchange of temporal and spiritual charity. The life of a priest in England is indeed a life of detachment. He lives in a hired house; he has neither land nor revenue; he eats the bread that is given to him, as the Apostles did, by the gatherings of the first day of the week. And with this he has to provide all spiritual things for the altar, and for the poor and for their children. It is a two-fold poverty, full of anxiety, but, if it be loved for its likeness to his Master's lot, full of sanctifying grace. Such a life is full of helps to personal perfection: the daily Mass and daily Communion, the custody of the Blessed Sacrament, the fellowship with Jesus on the altar, daily mental prayer, 'the habit of religion, the sign of perfection,' as Saint Thomas says, 'which he received when he was tonsured.' Add to this the cure of souls, and the endless abnegation of self which the seeking and saving of the lost, the striving with their sins, the bearing of their perversities, the weary watch-

ing day and night, at the beck and bid of all, demand of the priest. No shirt of hair is more penitential than the pastoral life. No life more blessed to those who have renounced themselves for Christ's sake ; none more intolerable to the hireling and to those who love their liberty and their ease. But the missionaries of England bind themselves by a solemn promise on oath, for the good of the Universal Church, never to desert the cure of souls.²¹ There is in all this the instrumental perfection, and in all who have the cure of souls there is also the state of perfection, at least inchoate. For every pastor must be ready to lay down his life for his sheep ; and many do so, either by fever and pestilence or by the slow wasting of the labour of unresting charity.

And if such be the obligation binding a priest to perfection, far more formidable is the obligation of the bishop. 'The state of religion,' Saint Thomas says, 'does not presuppose perfection, but leads on to perfection. But the office of a bishop presupposes perfection, so that the bishop is in the state of perfection already attained.'²²

For the sustaining of this burden he has all the

²¹ *Concil. Prov. Westm. IV. Dec. xii. 6, 7.*

²² *S. Thom. Opus. de Perf. Vitæ Spirit. c. xix. 2 ; Concil. Prov. Westm. IV. Dec. vii. 2.*

help given to the faithful and to the priesthood, and with this a grace attached to the state in which he is proportionate to his dangers and his needs. He is a sign to be spoken against ; a butt for all arrows and stones ; a prey of tongues ; and, as the key of the position, a point of endless assault. These things might perfect the least perfect. Sacraments and crosses sanctify at last those who are least like the Good Shepherd.

Such, then, is the perfection to which we are called ; and here, with two more thoughts, we will make an end.

1. First, let us confidently hope to attain the perfection of the Beatitudes, because it is a gift of God. It is the sovereign and free gift of our Heavenly Father for the merits of His Incarnate Son. His will is to give it to us ; for He is glorified in our perfection. Every soul that rises above the level of our commonplace life adds to His glory. The greatest glory ever offered to God was the first act of love in the Sacred Heart of the Divine Infant. All worship, and praise, and thanksgiving, and adoration were there in a measure above our infirmity. One perfect soul glorifies God more than a score of lukewarm and earthly minded. Saint Paul has given us a rule of perfection : ‘ Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.’ If we made this

the text of our life, how much we should leave undone; how far more carefully would all our works be examined and our motives purified from selfish reserves. Saints have ventured even to bind themselves by vow to do always that which is for God's greater glory. This is a hard and exacting law, which only saints could keep. But if we greatly desire to do His will more perfectly, He will not refuse our prayer; for if He wills that we abide still in our infirmities, it is to make us humble, and to keep us so; and in this He will be more glorified than if we received what we ask. It may be our desire to be less imperfect was for our own greater glory, and He Who knows all things read our hearts and granted our prayer more perfectly than we intended. Nevertheless, there is no degree of humility that we may not attain; for it is His gift. If, that is, we have the courage to ask it, and not to shrink when the humiliations come to fulfil our prayer. All our sanctification, from the first gift of regeneration, comes from Him, by a secret infusion of His Holy Spirit; and all our perfection is His work. Therefore it is easy of attainment; for He loves to make perfect what He has once begun.

2. The other truth is, that though all is of gift, all except the first grace of regeneration is also ac-

quired. Our will must co-operate in all—in faith, and hope, and charity—in all the gifts, and in all the fruits, and in all the Beatitudes. We are fellow-workers together with Him; and His will and ours, though two, yet work as one. ‘We can do all things through Christ, Who within us gives us strength.’ We must not break a link in this golden chain of grace; we must not strain it by reluctance, or by tardy and grudging compliance. If we refuse His inspiration when it moves us to things above ourselves, we do not know what we may forfeit, never to be found again. How many have been afraid to look at the light when it shone clearly, and have lost it for ever. It will never be known till the last day how many were on the threshold of the heavenly city, and, because they would not enter when they could, fell under the bondage of their own making, and could not enter when, like the foolish virgins, too late they would. Never till that day shall we know how much grace we have wasted, what golden seasons we have lost, what springtides have slipped away, what summer fruits we might have gathered, what autumn harvests we might have reaped and garnered for eternity. Let us, then, pray God to show us all His will, and give us strength to do it.

And now we have come to the end of our simple

thoughts on so divine a work. We have traced the rising, and the growth, and the expansion, and the fruitfulness of this mystical vine of our sanctification. We are each one of us after the likeness of our Divine Head; and our Father is the Husbandman Who prunes and dresses His own work in us. Every branch in us that beareth not fruit He taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit. His eyes are over us all the day long, and the darkness is no darkness with Him. He is always with us, and always at work on our sanctification. 'We know not what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; we shall see Him as He is.'

We have come to the foot of the mountain of Beatitudes, from which the new law of perfection has gone forth to the ends of the earth. We see the companies of the elect going up each in its order. First the poor, wayworn, and footsore; here and there one who on earth was great, and noble, and rich, but poor in spirit, in the great multitude who eat bread in the sweat of their face. Then the meek, noiseless as the flight of doves; then the mourners, with their heads covered, following the Man of Sorrow by the strait, sure road of affliction. After them those that hunger after God in the vehemence

of the spirit, speeding upward and saluting no man by the way ; next come the merciful, with their hands full of alms, which look like roses. After them the clean in heart, scaling the mountain like rays that run upward with the speed of lightning ; then come the peacemakers in the majesty of calm and joy ; and in the rear of all, the soldiers of Jesus, the heralds of the Holy Ghost to a world of sin, which smote them and slew them for their charity. All these are going upward. Shall we be left behind ? Aim higher and higher. Desire the best gifts. Be faithful over the least. Commit yourselves to the guidance of the Spirit of God, for He is Love, and Light, and Power. *Ipse perficiet.* As He began so He will make perfect.

XVII.

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY GHOST.



DEVOTION TO THE HOLY GHOST.

Because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. GAL. iv. 6.

IN closing what I have said on the work of the Holy Ghost, it would seem to me that our thoughts would be incomplete if we were not to conclude by speaking of the devotion and adoration we owe to the Person of the Holy Ghost Himself.

We will, therefore, take this last point, and with it end our subject.

Now Saint Paul says to the Galatians, that because we are sons by adoption in Baptism, therefore ‘God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts.’ In these words he speaks of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the Three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity. They are all engaged simultaneously in our sanctification. And it has always seemed to me to be both strange and wonderful that whereas we worship the ever-blessed Trinity—the Father, the

Son, and the Holy Ghost—in consubstantial unity; and whereas we worship the Person of the Father with a special and daily adoration every time we say the Lord's Prayer, and whereas we worship the Person of the Son by concluding all our prayers through His Name, and by adoring Him in the ever-blessed Sacrament; nevertheless, we rarely worship and adore with a distinct and special adoration the Person of God the Holy Ghost. Why is this? I believe it to be for this reason. The conception of the fatherhood of God and of our sonship to Him is a conception altogether natural to our hearts. We learn it in our home from our earliest consciousness in the relation we bear to our earthly father. The Incarnation of the Son of God brings Him also within the sphere and range of our intelligence and of our heart; so that we conceive of Him as Man incarnate, visible upon earth, and invested with all our sympathies, and with the love of His Sacred Heart full of compassion for us. These two conceptions are, I may say, within the range of nature. They come to us at once. But the Holy Ghost, a Spirit that has never been seen, has never been incarnate, inscrutable, present everywhere, never manifest except by the operations of His power—this is a reality, like the motion of the earth, which we know in our reason, but cannot detect by any sense; or it

is like the circulation of the blood, which we know as a fact, but never perceive all the day long. So the indwelling and the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul is a divine truth, so altogether inscrutable, so impalpable, so insensible, that we pass it by. Therefore we do not so often adore the Author and Giver of all grace with a special worship.

I will endeavour, then, to draw out, ^{briefly} as far as now ^{briefly} I can, the motives which ought to awaken in us a special devotion to God the Holy Ghost.

Saint Paul declares to the Galatians, that ‘when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons;’¹ that is to say, all the prophecies of the Old Testament were a prelude to the advent of the Son of God into the world: in like manner I may say that all the prophecies of the Son of God when He came were specially pointed to the advent of the Holy Ghost. He said: ‘It is expedient for you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you.’² ‘I will ask the Father, and He will send you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever.’³ And on the day of Pente-

¹ Gal. iv. 4.

² S. John xvi. 7.

³ S. John xiv. 16.

cost, as we read in the Acts, that prophecy was fulfilled: the advent of the Holy Ghost was accomplished. And Saint Augustine calls the day of Pentecost *Dies Natalis Spiritus Sancti*—the nativity of the Holy Ghost, parallel to the nativity of the Son. Saint Paul draws out the contrast between the dispensation of the Old Testament and the dispensation of the New in this manner. He calls the Old Testament the Ministry of the Letter, and he calls the New Testament the Dispensation of the Spirit. We are, therefore, under the dispensation of the Spirit, that is, under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. And yet, with the New Testament in our hands, many are still unconscious, as I said before, of the intimate personal relation in which we stand to the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, under Whose immediate action we are for our sanctification, and by Whose divine voice we are guided in our faith. I can easily understand that a man ignorant of the Scripture history might travel through the Holy Land, and pass through all the sacred places, without being conscious of where he was or of the supernatural history attaching to anything he saw. Another man, whose mind was full of the thought of Jesus of Nazareth, who had the sacred geography of the land consecrated by the footsteps of the Son of God in his

heart, in going through Judæa and Samaria would see memorials and admonitions of our Divine Saviour on every side. In like manner, any man who takes the New Testament into his hands, without the realisation of the personality and presence of the Holy Ghost, would perhaps read it from end to end and not perceive the special relation in which we stand to the Holy Ghost. But any one who will read the New Testament, bearing this truth in mind, cannot fail to perceive what I will call the footsteps, the traces, and the marks of the coming and of the working of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in our souls. He will find the New Testament to be full of this main idea of the Gospel—namely, that through the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Holy Ghost has come, by a special mission and with a special office, to dwell personally in the midst of us. The Apostles received the Holy Ghost when Jesus breathed upon them; for the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, and in time from the Son Incarnate. The Holy Ghost dwells in the mystical Body, and in every member of the same who is united to the Incarnate Son. We are related to Him, and He dwells in us, and it is through Him that we have union both with the Son and with the Father.

Let us, therefore, now go on and review the mo-

tives which ought to prompt us to a special adoration of the Divine Person of God the Holy Ghost. In a word, these reasons are the glory of His own Person, the glory of His office, and the special and vital work of salvation which He accomplishes in every one of us. These are the three chief motives.

1. Let us take, first, the glory of His Person. Every Whitsunday the Church brings this mystery before us; every time we say the *Gloria Patri* we declare Him to be coequal with the Father and the Son; every time we make the sign of the Cross we make an act of faith and, at least, an implicit act of adoration to the Holy Ghost. All the works of God in creation, though they are works of the Holy Trinity, are in a special sense the works of the Holy Ghost, because it is the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity Who is in immediate union with all creatures. The titles of the Holy Ghost declare His divine glory. He is the Term, or the Complement, of the Holy Trinity, because the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son; but there the Holy Trinity rests complete. No divine person proceeds from the Holy Ghost. He is the last of the three Divine Persons, and therefore He is the Complement, the Perfecter, and the Term of the ever-blessed Three. He is, so to speak, the

Bound of the boundless nature, which is unlimited. Again, He is called the Perfecter for this reason. God the Father is uncreated being, God the Son is uncreated intelligence, and God the Holy Ghost is uncreated love; and the uncreated being, intelligence, and love of God are God. God without intelligence would not be perfect; and God without love would not be perfect; and as we can conceive nothing beyond being, intelligence, and love, God the Holy Ghost, Who is the love of the Father and the Son, perfects the mystery of the ever-blessed Trinity. But, inasmuch as He is the Term of the Divine Persons, and after Him and beyond Him there is no other divine personality, it is He Who is in immediate contact with all creatures. In the Holy Ghost the infinite nature of God has its fulness, and by Him the finite nature of creatures begins to exist. * All the creatures of God are therefore from the Holy Ghost; they are His works; He is therefore the *Creator Spiritus*, the Spirit Who made all things, the Spirit Who impresses law, and order, and perfection upon all the works of God. And as He has created all things, so He is Himself the Giver of all things. He is *Dator munerum*, as we say in the sequence of the Holy Mass at Pentecost—‘the Giver of all gifts.’ In the *Veni Creator Spiritus*—a hymn which is a litany

Part III
made up of the titles of the Holy Ghost—we call Him ‘Creator,’ ‘the Gift of the Most High God,’ ‘the Living Fountain,’ or ‘the Fountain of Life,’ ‘the Fire,’ ‘the Paraclete,’ ‘the Sevenfold Gift,’ ‘the Spiritual Unction.’ All these are titles of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, describing not so much what He is as what He does. But what He does He is; for He is the gift of God to us, and in Him we have life, light, sanctity, and all things. Therefore I say we ought to adore Him with a special divine adoration; and to give Him His glory, co-equal, coeternal with the Father and the Son, with Whom, in His distinct personality, He is to be adored and glorified with praise and thanksgiving, with submission and obedience. Such, then, is the first motive—the glory of His Person.

Part IV
2. And the second motive is the glory of His office. I have already said that the first creation of God was a work of the Holy Ghost; and the Spirit of God, as we read, brooded or moved upon the face of the waters when the world was without form and void, a deep and dark abyss of God’s omnipotence. And as He was the Author of the first creation of nature, so in a far more eminent way He is the Author of the second, or new creation of grace. For, when sin and death had smitten the first creation

of God, He sent forth His Spirit, and recreated all things. A new creation began to rise. And as in the beginning God first created the light and then both night and day—for the day is light measured by the sun; so before the new creation of God arose there was a day-spring, a dawn of twilight, a prelude of the brightness of the coming noon. The morning light was the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God—the firstfruits of the full and perfect sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost. She was the first and the last in the natural lineage of the children of Adam in whom sin had no place. The Mother of the Incarnate Son was sheltered and preserved from the inheritance of original sin, so that never for a moment was so much as a shadow cast by sin upon her spotless soul. In her was no privation of grace. From the first moment of her existence she was full of the Holy Ghost. The most perfect work of sanctification that the world has ever seen, purchased by the Precious Blood of the Son of God Himself, and given out of free and sovereign grace, is the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. Such was the aurora before the sun. Next came the day, the Incarnation of the Eternal Word.

The efficient author of the Incarnation was the Holy Ghost: ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,

and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;⁴ and therefore we say in our baptismal Creed, *Conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto*—‘He was conceived of the Holy Ghost.’ The work of the Incarnation, then, was the work of the Holy Ghost. And as the Incarnation was His work, so also was the sanctification of the Incarnate Son. The unction of the Holy Ghost rested upon Him. And the seven gifts dwelt in Him in all the plenitude of sanctifying grace, of which He is the fountain to us. Even His resurrection from the dead is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. He is declared to be the Son of God in power, ‘by the Spirit of sanctification’⁵ which raised Him from the dead; and ‘if the Spirit which raised up Jesus from the dead be in you, God shall also quicken your mortal bodies;’⁶ so that the whole work of the new creation is also the work of the Holy Ghost. He is the efficient cause of all grace. And as the natural body which the Son of God took was fashioned by the omnipotence of the Holy Ghost, so is His mystical Body. We read in the Gospel of Saint John that ‘the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified’⁷—that

⁴ S. Luke i. 35.

⁶ Rom. viii. 11.

⁵ Rom. i. 4.

⁷ S. John vii. 39.

is, He must needs ascend into heaven before the Holy Ghost could descend upon earth : as He Himself had said, ‘ It is expedient for you that I go ; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come.’⁸ Therefore He ascended ; and He ascended, as the prophecy declares, ‘ that He might receive gifts for men.’⁹ What are those gifts ? It was the Gift which contains all gifts. It was the *Donum Dei* which He poured out on the day of Pentecost—the Holy Ghost Who is given to us, and His personal presence to be with us for ever. When the Holy Ghost descended from heaven on that day, He came down upon each of the Apostles ; and yet not as upon twelve men separately taken one from another, but upon twelve men as united in one body. They became the centre and the germ of that mystical Body, which consists of all who are united with the Head in heaven by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And the fellowship or society created by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the faithful is the Holy Catholic Church, or the mystical Body of Christ. Saint Paul says : ‘ As the body is one, and hath many members, so also is Christ’¹⁰—Christ the head, and you the members united to Him and to one another, inhabited by one divine life, that is, by the Holy Ghost Himself, Who is indissolubly united to that collective

⁸ S. John xvi. 7.⁹ Eph. iv. 8.¹⁰ 1 Cor. xii. 12.

body, and endows it with imperishable life, with immutable faith, and with inexhaustible sanctity. The Sanctifier, then, dwells in the Church as the fountain of sanctification to all the members of the mystical Body. The note of sanctity by which the Church in the world is known is the supernatural manifestation of the presence of the Holy Ghost. And as the Holy Ghost is the Creator and Sanctifier of the Church, He is also its Guide and its Light. The presiding Intelligence which preserves it in the way of truth is the mind of the Spirit: and the voice of the Church is the voice of the Holy Ghost. When men deny the infallibility of the Church of Jesus Christ, they do not know—at least so I trust—that they are denying the office of the Holy Ghost Himself. And as the Church is His work, so all of us who are born again by Baptism, and grafted into that Church, become thereby the firstborn and the firstfruits of the Holy Ghost. He dwells in us, as Saint Paul said to the Galatians, because we are the sons of God; ‘God hath sent forth His Spirit, the Spirit of His Son, into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.’¹¹

The Apostle has said: ‘Know you not that the Spirit of Christ is in you, except you be reprobates? If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none

¹¹ Gal. iv. 6.

of His.¹² And again: 'Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, Which is in you?'¹³ Why does he say 'your body'? Because the soul is in the body, and the soul is the seat of the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost. Again he says: 'What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.'¹⁴ As no man knows the things of the Spirit of God unless the Spirit of God dwells in him, so also no man knows the personal experience and the hidden consciousness of any other man, but only the man himself. And once more Saint Paul says: 'The Spirit also beareth testimony with our spirit that we are the sons of God.'¹⁵ And therefore, as we have, every one of us, the consciousness that we have a soul endowed with intelligence and will, and as we are intimately conscious of the inward facts which pass within us, and of the inward acts of our thoughts and of our volitions, so they who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them have, or ought to have, a consciousness of that divine presence and a knowledge of the facts of His grace within them, and of the superna-

¹² 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

¹³ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 11.

¹⁵ Rom. viii. 16.

tural acts of faith, hope, and charity which they make by His power.

Shall I say it then, dear brethren, plainly? We are not spiritual, we are not supernatural. We live in the world and converse with it until we become worldly in the habit of our lives. We do not keep alive by mental prayer, and by recollection of the divine presence without us and within, this great, primary, and vital truth of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. And therefore it is that there is so little true, loving, earnest charity among us. This consciousness of a divine presence it is which, if the times required it, would make men martyrs; this it is which would make men confessors, ready to lay down all things in the world for conscience' sake; and this it is which would make men who are never called to be martyrs or confessors deny themselves all the day long. If only we were conscious that we could thereby glorify God, and better correspond with the operations of grace within us, instead of living our tardy laggard lives we should be guileless and fervent disciples of Jesus Christ.

3. Thirdly, weigh what you owe to the person of the Holy Ghost. Saint Paul says: 'The charity of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who

is given to us.¹⁶ The personal Charity of God is poured forth into our hearts. There is in you, as there is in the Church itself, the Living Fountain; the fountain of the waters of life is in you, God the Holy Ghost, the Charity of God, by whom you are united to the Son and to the Father. And that fountain of living water is always rising, and, in the measure in which our hearts expand to receive it, our hearts are enlarged; but in the measure in which our hearts are narrowed by self-love, and the love of the world, and the things of the world, the love of God has not room to spread and to dilate our hearts. When the Psalmist says, ‘I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou hast enlarged my heart,’¹⁷ he means precisely this: ‘I will speed with fervour and energy in Thy law when my heart is enlarged, when it is dilated by the love of God within me.’ Ever since your first consciousness—ay, even from your Baptism, when you were unconscious—the Holy Ghost has been within you; all through your growth, in your childhood, in every age, in all your spiritual life, the Holy Ghost has been with you, springing up as a fountain of grace. You have been encompassed and enveloped by the love of God. Even if you have fallen from baptismal innocence, it is He that stung your conscience and

¹⁶ Rom. v. 5.¹⁷ Ps. cxviii. 32.

brought you back to Himself. And all the while how unconscious have we been. And more than this, how we have wearied His patience. If His patience were not divine, if His long-suffering were not infinite, where should we have been long ago? We should have been cast out of His love for ever. How we have provoked Him by mortal sins, with our eyes open; by venial sins, committed in multitudes that no man could number, committed deliberately and habitually, morning and night, day by day, hour by hour, year by year. And how we have provoked Him by coldness and neglect, hiding our faces from Him, turning our backs upon Him, even when He has been calling us to Himself with the tenderness of His love and pity.

Once more, what generosity does He show us. As I have said before, the light of the sun, the showers that water the earth, are not so abundant as the graces of the Holy Ghost, as the lights and inspirations which He has poured into our hearts. We have been wasting the grace of God all our life long, and there has been a hand unseen pouring in oil, lest the light of the lamp should die out. If there had not been a perpetual ministration of the grace of God, of which we were unconscious, who knows whether I should be here to speak to you or

you to hear me? He has given you strength, which you have oftentimes neglected, oftentimes resisted, oftentimes refused. In every duty that you have had to do, and even in every duty that you have failed to do, He has helped you. When you have thought that you could do nothing, He has always given you strength, even at the moment when you were giving way; when you had lost all hope, you have found that you had strength enough to do His will; in every temptation under which you have been falling there has been a sudden and strong help, which has carried you through all hindrances. You have felt that it was not your own victory, but that God had carried you over a gulf and set you upon a rock. Under every cross, which you have said was so sharp that you could bear it no longer, there has been grace given from moment to moment. When you were sinking, it bore you up. The words which He spoke to the Apostle He has been speaking to you: 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity.'¹⁸ So He has been ever ministering strength to you all your life long—in childhood, youth, and manhood—to this day. And at times, when you least hoped for it, what sweetness He has poured out into your hearts. You have not

¹⁸ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

even looked to see from whence it came, but what peace, what joy, what aspirations have lifted you up towards heaven, and filled you with gladness. Who gave all this to you, even when you forgot Him?

Hear the words of Holy Scripture: 'How great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, which Thou hast hid for those that fear Thee.'¹⁹ The rain which comes down in a flood is a multitude of drops, but the multitude of the sweetness of God is as the waves of the sea. The Giver of all sweetness is within you, waiting only for you to ask it of Him. He has shed it abroad in your hearts even when you have not asked it; when you have been unconscious of the gift, and have thought that it came from some solace of friends or kindred. And in times of sorrow, of mourning, of affliction, consolations have come over you, like the soft breath of the evening, and like the sweet fragrance of the field that God has blessed, and you have rejoiced, and have returned to a peace sensibly above all earthly happiness. Perhaps you traced all this to natural sources. You have not said to yourself, 'This is the gift of the Holy Ghost.' If you had said so, and had turned to Him, and blessed Him, and adored Him, for what He was doing in your heart, He would have multiplied that gift sevenfold.

¹⁹ Ps. xxx. 20.

Now here we have, I may say, the three motives of devotion to the Holy Ghost—namely, the glory of His Person, of His office, and of His work of love and grace which He has been accomplishing in you all your life long.

1. We owe Him, then, two things. First, we owe Him adoration. We must adore Him as we adore the Father; we must adore Him as we adore the Son; and in order so to do we must realise with a clear recognition of faith His Divine Personality as coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son in all the splendour and glory of the ever-blessed Trinity. And, next, we must have a more lively conception of His presence within us. As He is present in the Church of God, to be its infallible Light and Guide, so He is present in our souls as our Sanctifier, the source of all light and grace. He has been so present in us from our earliest consciousness. And, lastly, we must realise and have a perception that He is at all times bearing 'testimony in our hearts that we are the sons of God.' We must in turn speak with Him, and love Him, and praise Him, and glorify Him, both by inward acts of adoration in our soul and by outward acts of obedience in our lives.

2. And the other debt we owe Him is to make Him reparation—reparation for our own many sins;

Part II. sins of commission, sins of omission, sins of thought, word, and action, sins against the Commandments of God, sins against our conscience, sins against His light and grace; for, as the Apostle says, We may grieve Him, and we may resist Him, and we may quench His light. It may be that some who hear me may have done all this, and yet have been restored by His life-giving grace. We therefore owe Him a reparation for the multitude of our sins; and not for ours only, but likewise for the sins of other men. Look abroad upon the world round about you, and tell me is it governed by the Spirit of God Who made it, or is it governed by the spirit of Satan who is the god and the destroyer of this world? For the sins of all who have been born again of water and the Holy Ghost in Baptism, and yet have offended against Him, we ought to make reparation, and that reparation ought to be made in this wise: first, by promptness in following His inspirations; next, by proportionate correspondence, so that when He bestows a great grace upon us we correspond in the measure of that grace; not niggardly, not burying the trust that has been given us in a napkin, so that when He gives us a grace of a thousand to make Him a return of ten: and yet this we are doing all the day long; thirdly, by serving Him in great purity of heart; and

by purity of heart I mean two things : not only the absence from the heart of all that defiles it, but the absence from the heart of all that makes it double, such as the love of the world, and of creatures, and of self. These sins blot out the love of God and overpower the grace of the Holy Ghost. Such, then, are some of the many ways in which we may make reparation. And to make this advice still more definite, I will give you two short counsels that you may easily put into practice. The first is to hunt down and slay your little faults ; he that is faithful in that which is the least is faithful also in that which is greater ; and they who will hunt down, and slay, and exterminate their little faults, be sure of it, will never willingly commit greater sins. The other counsel is this : do your little duties, which most men make light of, with great exactness ; for if you will faithfully do your lesser duties, your greater duties, I may say, will take care of themselves.

Now to conclude all that I have been saying There is a conflict in the midst of which we are, a warfare the more perilous because invisible. There are three spirits always contending together ; there is the Spirit of God, the spirit of Satan, and our poor human spirit in midst of this strife of life and death. These three spirits are on a battlefield, and the

‘whole life of man is a warfare upon earth.’ If you ‘are led by the Spirit of God, you are the sons of God;’ and if you are led by the spirit of the god of this world, you are his servants; and if you are led by your own spirit, you are his slaves.

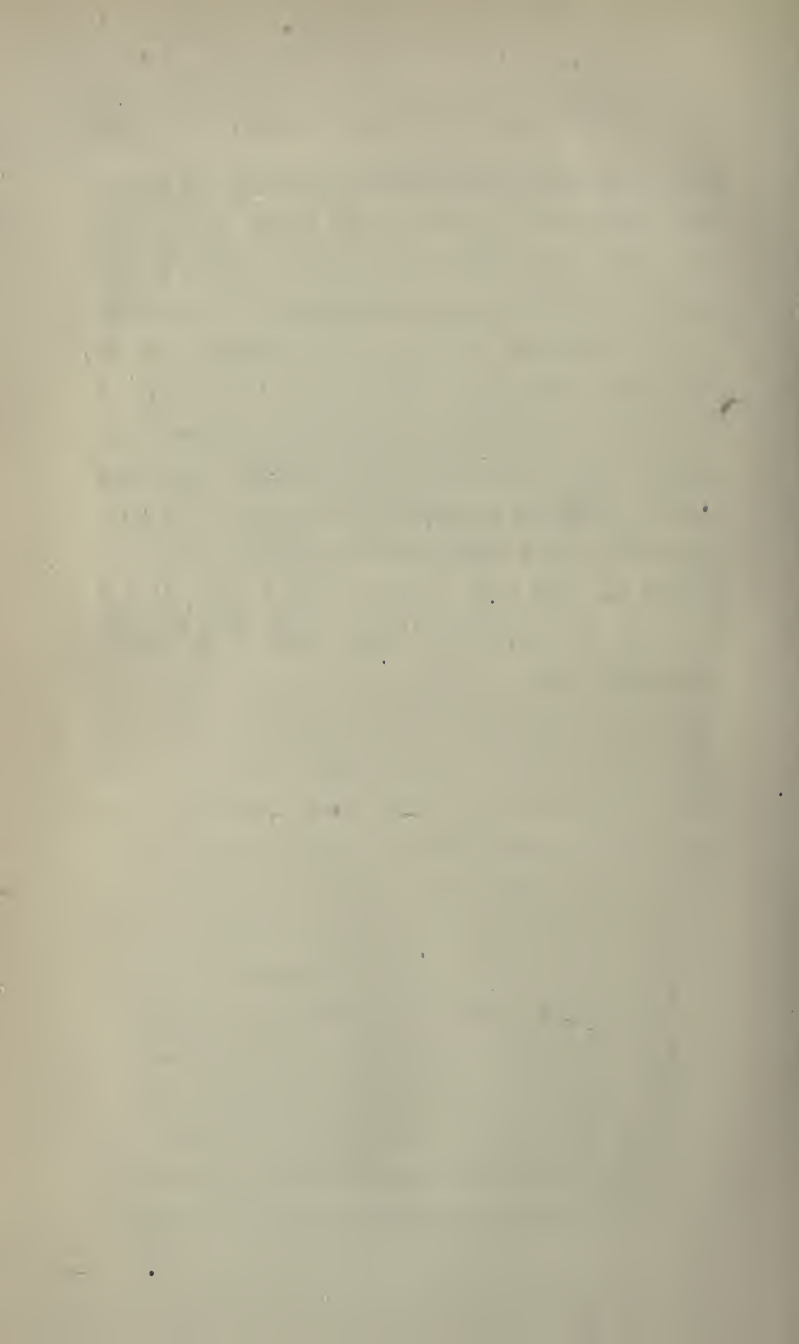
Try your spiritual life in this balance. If you know your dangers, the gift of holy fear will be very dear to you, and wisdom will counsel you what to do in every danger and in every trial. To some my words may seem strange, remote from our daily life, theoretical, and even fantastic. Why? If the Spirit bears testimony in your hearts, and if you are the sons of God, you will understand what I say. Saint Augustine, who, before he knew God, was the type of a man of the nineteenth century—intellectual, cultivated, eloquent, scientific, full of philosophy—sought God everywhere, but never found Him. When he had learned the reason of his failure, he said: ‘Thou, O God, wert within me, and I knew it not. I was seeking Thee outside of myself. I sought Thee everywhere, but could not find Thee, because I did not seek in my own soul, where Thou art to be found.’ So it may be perhaps to some who hear me now. They have been turning over the pages of books, they have been straining their intellect with science, they have been listening to the pompous dogmas of the

wise men of the world, they have read modern metaphysics, they have enveloped themselves in the illumination of Germany, they have studied the leading articles of the newspapers, and they have not found God; nay, even the existence of God is doubtful to them. Why? Listen to Saint Augustine once more: 'Thou didst call me, and, after a long time, Thou didst break through my deafness. Thou didst shine round about me, Thy light was within me, and only at length didst Thou open the eyes of my blindness. Thou didst send forth Thy fragrance upon me, and when I perceived it I was glad. Thou didst at last touch me, and then I broke forth like a flame into Thy peace.'

Now, it may be that some who are here listening to me at this time have never yet made this discovery. In all the sciences of the nineteenth century, this spiritual science is the last that men cultivate. And I will say to you all, however much you know of God, you have all of you need to open your ears more wistfully to His words, to open your eyes more widely to His light, to put forth your hands still more eagerly to feel the hand of God, to unfold the spiritual life which is in you, and to unite your hearts and your souls still more intimately with Him. Therefore, in order to do this, I would ask you from this day

to the end of your lives to offer every day some act of adoration and of reparation. Make up your mind now that not a day shall pass from this day to your last without some act of adoration to the Person of the Holy Ghost, without some act of reparation made to Him for your own sins and for the sins of other men. Say day by day the majestic hymn of the Church, the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, or that other, equally beautiful, and even more full of human tenderness, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*; or say every day seven times the *Gloria Patri*, in honour of the Holy Ghost, to obtain His seven gifts; or make some prayer of your own; raise up your hearts to God, and make, each of you, some short act of reparation and adoration out of the fulness of your soul; or say day by day, 'O God the Holy Ghost, Whom I have slighted, grieved, resisted from my childhood unto this day, reveal unto me Thy personality, Thy presence, Thy power. Make me to know Thy sevenfold gifts: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and fortitude, of knowledge and piety, and of the fear of the Lord; and make me to be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. O Thou Who art the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, O Thou Who art the love of the Father and the Son, O Thou Who baptisest with fire, and sheddest abroad the love of

God in our hearts, shed abroad Thy love in my heart. One thing have I desired of the Lord : that will I seek after : not wealth, rank, power, worldly home, worldly happiness, or any worldly good, but one drop of that holy flame, one drop of that heavenly fire, to kindle me and set me all on fire with the love of my God. Let that holy flame burn up and consume in me every spot and soil of the flesh and of the spirit. Purify me sevenfold with the fire of Thy love. Consume me as a holy sacrifice acceptable unto Thee. Kindle me with zeal, melt me with sorrow, that I may live the life and die the death of a fervent penitent.'



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